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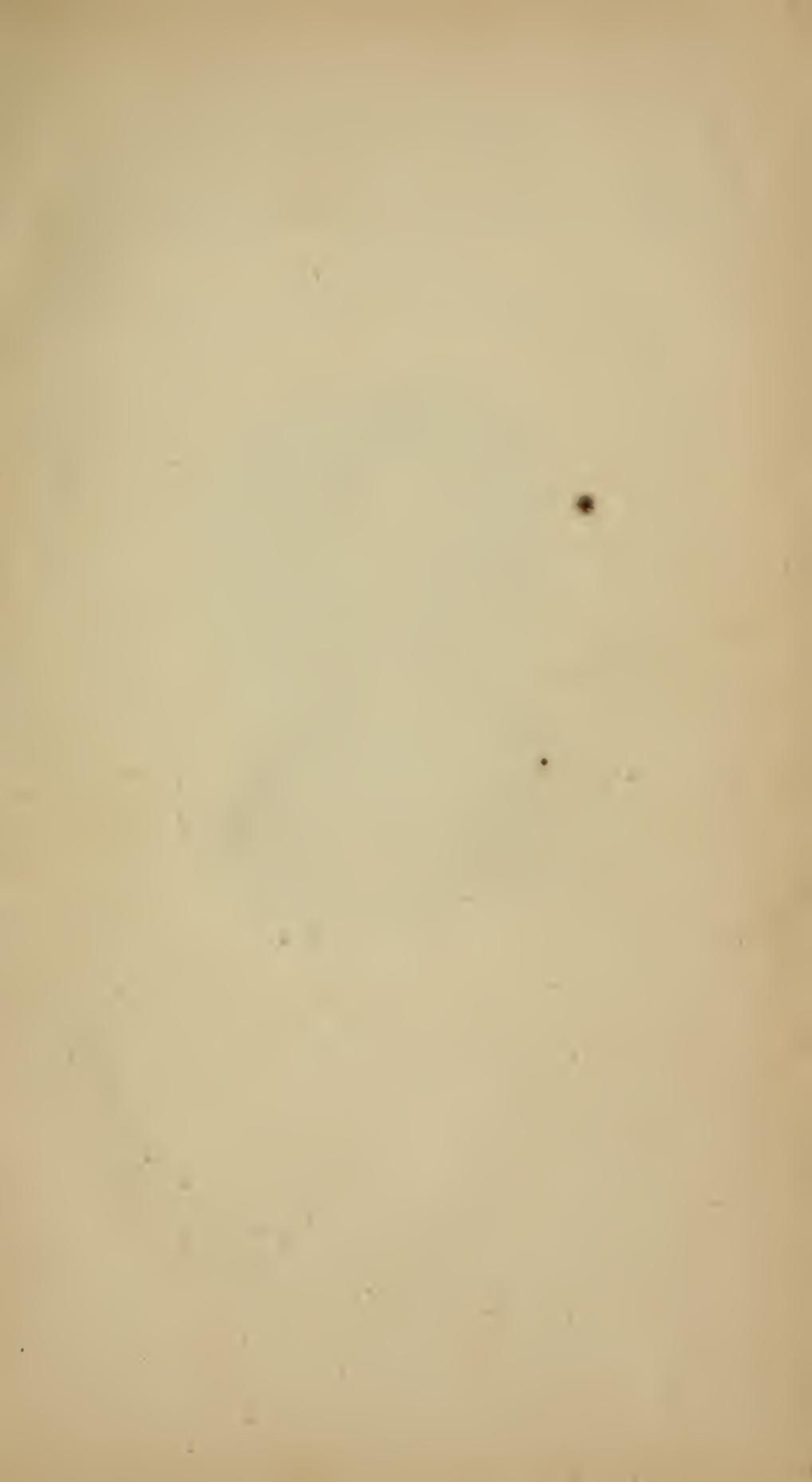
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JOSEPH REED.

BOSTON,  
CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN,

1824.



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VOL. VII.

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CHARLES LEE

AND

JOSEPH REED

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BY JARED SPARKS.

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LIFE  
OF  
CHARLES LEE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION;

BY  
JARED SPARKS.



## P R E F A C E.

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AFTER the death of General Lee, his papers fell into the hands of Mr. William Goddard, of Baltimore, and have since been preserved in his family. He issued proposals for publishing selected parts of them in three volumes; but, for some reason not explained, this design was never fulfilled. A few years afterwards, Mr. Langworthy published a brief selection in a small volume, to which an imperfect Memoir of his life was prefixed. Recently, another Memoir, more valuable and interesting, has appeared in England, from the pen of Sir Henry Bunbury.

In addition to these sources, the writer of the following sketch has been favored by Mr. William G. Goddard with the use of the original papers left by General Lee. Among these are letter-books containing his official correspondence during a large part of the period of his public service in the revolution; and also many drafts of letters written in England, Poland, Italy, and other countries, before he came to America. Access has likewise been had to his correspond-

ence with Congress, General Washington, and the prominent leaders in the civil and military lines, while he resided in America. To the kindness of Sir Henry Bunbury the writer is indebted for a copy of more than thirty of General Lee's letters to his sister; and his particular acknowledgments are due to Captain Ralph R. Wormley, R. N., of London, and Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, for the generous aid they have rendered in enabling him to procure other materials.

## CHARLES LEE.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Birth and Education.—Joins the Army.—Campaigns in America during the French War.—Wounded in the Attack upon Ticonderoga under General Abercromby.—Aids in the Conquest of Niagara and Montreal.—Returns to Europe.—Writes a Pamphlet in Favor of retaining Canada at the Peace.—Engaged in a Campaign in Portugal.—Successful Action at Villa Velha.*

AMONG those distinguished in the American revolution, few began their career with brighter prospects, or closed it under a darker cloud, than General Charles Lee. Endowed with uncommon abilities, possessing a chivalrous spirit, a soldier of long experience and undaunted courage, a true friend of liberty and of the rights of mankind, he engaged in the cause with an ardor, which gained for him at once the confidence and raised high the hopes of the whole people. But

these eminent qualities were shaded by a waywardness of temper, a rashness of resolution, a license of speech, an eager ambition, and an eccentricity of manners, which defeated his own lofty purposes, and disappointed the expectations of those, who received him as a friend, and hailed him as a benefactor. It would be ungrateful to say, that he did not render to this country, in the time of her trial, important services; it would be futile to deny, that, by his indiscretion and ill-timed vehemence, he contributed much to diminish the respect, which these services might otherwise claim. He was alike the artificer of the envied reputation which he enjoyed at one period of his life, and of the misfortunes that cast a gloom over its close.

CHARLES LEE was a native of England, the youngest son of General John Lee, of Dernhall, in Cheshire. His mother was Isabella, the second daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, of Stanney, in the same county. He was born in 1731, and from childhood was destined to the profession of arms, having received a commission at eleven years of age. Little is known of his early education and discipline. For some time he was placed at the grammar school of Bury St. Edmunds, and also at a school in Switzerland, where, in addition to the Latin and Greek classics, he obtained a thorough knowledge of the French language

Whatever advantages he may have enjoyed, his subsequent writings prove that he turned them to good account. Ardent, ambitious, and of exceedingly quick parts, he pursued with avidity whatsoever he took in hand. His reading was extensive, and not confined in its range or in the subjects to which it was directed. By study, and by his rambles in various countries, he acquired a competent skill in the Spanish, Italian, and German tongues. Among his papers are many fragments, in his own handwriting, in Latin, French, and Italian, showing that the use of these languages was familiar to him. In short, his education, as qualifying him for the practical affairs of life, would seem to have been not inferior to that of many, who go through the more regular forms of a university course.

As the time approached for entering upon the active duties of his profession, he devoted much attention to the science of military tactics. At the age of twenty-four we find him at the head of a company of grenadiers. The long war, which severed Canada from the French power, was just at this time breaking out, and the young officer was destined to gain his first experience in arms on the frontiers of the American colonies.

For the campaign of 1757, the British ministry formed the grand project of taking Louisburg, the Gibraltar of America, which had been captured,

during the last war, chiefly by an expedition from New England, but inconsiderately given back to the French at the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was now determined to recover this formidable fortress. Early in the spring, the troops for the expedition were drawn together in the neighborhood of Cork, in Ireland, and vessels of war and transports were assembled for their embarkation at that port. The regiment to which Lee belonged was destined to take a part in this enterprise. A large fleet, consisting of ships of the line, frigates, and transports, with five thousand troops, sailed from the harbor of Cork on the 8th of May. The fleet kept together twelve days, when it was separated by a fog, and again by a storm; but all the vessels arrived at Halifax in the early part of July. They were here joined by six thousand men from New York, and all the preliminary measures were adopted without delay for the grand object of the expedition.

Intelligence was soon received, however, that the French had thrown so strong a force into Louisburg, and guarded it by so many heavy ships, that it was inexpedient to hazard an attack. And thus the scheme, which had begun with such a vast array of preparation, was deferred till the next year.

Meantime, the troops were employed at Halifax, and in other garrisons of Nova Scotia; but

in the early part of the following year, a large detachment of this army was sent to New York. It is uncertain whether Lee accompanied these troops, or preceded them ; but he was in New York and Philadelphia early in the spring of 1758, and in the following June we find him stationed with a part of the army at Schenectady. Some time after he left England, he purchased a company in the forty-fourth regiment, for which he paid nine hundred pounds.

While at Schenectady, he had much intercourse with the Mohawk Indians, and was captivated by their manners, their "hospitable, civil and friendly" deportment, the personal beauty of many of them, their dress, their graceful carriage, and by what he calls their good breeding, or "constant desire to do everything that will please you, and strict carefulness not to say or do anything that may offend you." He became so great a favorite with them, that he was adopted into the tribe of the Bear, under the name of Onewaterika, which signifies boiling water, or one whose spirits are never asleep. By this adoption, among other marks of distinction, he acquired the privilege of smoking a pipe in their councils.\*

But he was not destined long to enjoy these honors. His regiment was ordered to march to

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\* MS. Letter dated at Schenectady, June 18th, 1758

Fort William Henry, at the south end of Lake George; and, by the 1st of July, ten thousand provincials and six thousand regular troops were assembled at that place, under the command of General Abercromby. Then followed the memorable assault on Ticonderoga, in which the English were repulsed with a heavy loss, the gallant Lord Howe was killed, and Stark and other provincial officers gave proofs of the spirit and valor, that were to be called to a severer trial at a future day.

Lee was wounded while bravely attempting to penetrate to the French breastworks. In a letter to a friend, written a few days after the action, he says, "It is with the greatest difficulty that I make out a few lines to you, as I have received a very bad wound in the side, which has, I believe, broken some of my ribs, and rendered it almost impossible for me to raise myself from my bed." He then describes the principal operations of the army from the time it left Fort William Henry, in more than a thousand boats launched on the waters of Lake George, till it returned from this disastrous expedition. According to his belief, and, he says, the belief of the other officers, the disgraceful failure was owing to the weakness and cowardice of the General, who left the troops exposed in a hopeless conflict without orders for five hours in front of the lines

of Ticonderoga, and who retreated precipitately up Lake George with the whole army, when he might have renewed the assault with a moral certainty of success.\*

Lee, with other wounded officers, was removed to Albany, where he remained till his wound was healed. He was next stationed on Long Island, at which place he probably continued through the winter. In this encampment he was led into an adventure, which might have ended in fatal consequences. A person, whom he calls "a little

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\* In the same letter he pays the following tribute to that gallant young officer, Lord Howe, who was killed in a skirmish at the head of an advancing column, the day before the attack on Ticonderoga. "Very few men were lost on our side, in this skirmish ; but among these few was the most estimable Lord Howe, whose only fault was that of not knowing his own value. In short, the loss of him was so great, that it would not be rant or exaggeration to exclaim, as Antony does on Cæsar's death ;

'O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !  
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down.'

It was entirely owing to his activity and industry, that everything was in readiness at so much an earlier season of the year than usual ; it was owing to his weight, consequence, and spirit, that the General was kept from following the dictates of his weak and despicable managers solely and implicitly, as he did afterwards ; and it is most certain, that had he lived, the public would not have suffered this loss, nor our arms have been disgraced in this manner"

*MS. Letter.*

cowardly surgeon," treated him very ill, composing a libel on him, and reading it to the General. The affront drew from Lee a severe chastisement: The surgeon had not the spirit to resent it in the way usually practised by military men, when points of honor are concerned. He placed himself in a road where he knew Lee was to pass, seized the bridle of his horse, presented a pistol at his breast, and fired. At that instant the horse started to the right, and Lee escaped with a contusion on his body. The ruffian drew another pistol, but it was struck from his hand by Captain Dunbar, who happened to be present. The affair was settled afterwards, by the consent of Lee and Dunbar, on condition that the culprit should make a public acknowledgment of his crime and leave the army.\*

The next campaign was performed by the regiment to which Lee belonged in the expedition against the French garrison at Niagara. The place was invested by two thousand British troops, and one thousand Indians of the Six Nations, under General Prideaux. After a siege of nineteen days, and a sharp action with a body of French and Indians, who were coming as a reënforcement, in which the English were victorious, the garrison capitulated. The conquest

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\* MS. Letter, dated at Long Island, December 7th, 1758

was very important, since it cut off the channel of intercourse between the French in Canada and Louisiana, and threw into the hands of the English the entire control of the upper lakes. Captain Lee was much exposed during the engagement with the French and Indians, and two balls grazed his hair.

Soon after the capitulation, Lee was sent with another officer and fourteen men to ascertain what became of the remnant of the French army that escaped from the battle. They were the first English troops that ever crossed Lake Erie. They went to Presq' Isle, and thence by way of Venango down the western branch of the Ohio to Fort Duquesne, which was then in possession of the British. He remained there but a short time, when he began a long march of seven hundred miles to meet General Amherst at Crown Point. From this place he performed another march to Oswego, and was then ordered to Philadelphia, where he was stationed through the winter on the recruiting service.\*

In the campaign of 1760, Lee's regiment was attached to the forces led by General Amherst from Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, a navigation never before undertaken by a British army. The surrender of Montreal

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\* MS. Letter, dated at Philadelphia, March 1st, 1760.

completed the conquest of Canada, so nobly begun the year before by Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and closed the war in America. Lee soon afterwards returned to England.

This brief sketch has been given, not with a view of illustrating the personal conduct or military merit of the young captain of grenadiers ; there are no materials for a narrative of this kind ; in his letters he speaks little of his own adventures ; but these four years of unremitting service, during which his days and nights were wholly passed in camps or in the field, must have furnished a mind like his with most valuable lessons of experience as an officer, and inured him to the habits and privations of a soldier's life.\*

Canada being now conquered, and the war drawing to a close, the terms of peace began to be warmly discussed by different parties in England. One party was for restoring Canada to the French, and taking Guadaloupe and other

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\* General Armstrong relates the following anecdote of Lee in his *Life of Montgomery*. When the British finally captured Louisburg, in 1758, a bomb thrown from the fort knocked off the hat and grazed the skull of General Lawrence, who was standing in the trenches, but without seriously injuring him. When Lee heard of this incident, he exclaimed, "I'll resign to-morrow." "Why so?" asked the person to whom he spoke. "Because," said the wit, "none but a fool will remain in a service in which the generals' heads are bomb-proof."

possessions in the West Indies as an equivalent. This scheme was defended by the able and eloquent pen of Burke. On the other side, Franklin urged, with singular clearness and force of reasoning, the policy of holding Canada. In the course of the controversy, Charles Lee is said to have entered the lists in defence of the same policy, and to have written a pamphlet which received the commendation of Franklin.\*

Meantime, Lee was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and was soon called again into active service. Spain had committed hostilities upon Portugal, and threatened to over-

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\* It has been supposed, that Lee wrote the tract entitled "Considerations on the Importance of Canada, and the Bay and River of St. Lawrence," published in London, 1759. The style of this performance, however, bears no resemblance to that of the writings known to have come from his pen. Moreover, the dedication to Mr. Pitt, prefixed to the pamphlet, is dated "London, October 17th, 1759," at which time Lee was probably in America.

The conjecture that he wrote "A Letter to an Honorable Brigadier-General, Commander-in-chief of his Majesty's Forces in Canada," published in 1760, is more probable. The style bears strong marks of his peculiar vein and manner, and the sentiments accord with those which he expressed on other occasions. It is a severe and pungent philippic against General Townshend, who assumed the command after the death of Wolfe, and who, in his public despatches, was more brief in his praises of the immortal hero of the Plains of Abraham, than his extraordinary merits

whelm that country with her armies, mainly to compel this latter power to join France and Spain in their war against England. For a long time, a treaty of peace and amity had existed between England and his Portuguese Majesty, and he could see no reason why he should violate his faith, and desert an old friend, for the sake of embroiling himself in the quarrels of his neighbors, in which he had no concern. In this state of things, his Britannic Majesty could do no less than sustain the cause of an ally, who had thus continued faithful to his pledges. An army of eight thousand men was despatched to Portu-

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and services justly required. In one of his letters written from America a few months after this event, Lee says, "What an irreparable loss was that glorious hero, Wolfe! and such frankness, such unbounded generosity to particulars, such zeal for the public, with such amazing talents for war, that not to be in raptures with this divine character, is, I think, an impiety to our country, which gave him birth. General Townshend seems to have been sparing of his eulogiums upon the fallen conqueror, on whom (as the whole glory of this mighty acquisition was conferred on him by the unanimous voice of the army) he seems to have looked with an invidious eye. Such is the fate of superior, unrivalled merit in our contemporaries." The pamphlet mentioned above has been recently reprinted in London, with an Introduction by Mr. Simons, in which he attempts to prove that it was written by JUNIUS. His proofs are conjectural, and will apply with equal or greater force to General Lee.

gal, commanded at first by Lord Tyrawley, and afterwards by the Earl of Loudoun. Among the other officers were Brigadier-General Burgoyne and Colonel Charles Lee.

Before the arrival of these troops, the Spaniards had passed the frontiers of Portugal, committed depredations, and made themselves masters of several important cities. The combined English and Portuguese armies were at length put under the command of the Count de la Lippe, who had won a brilliant reputation in the German wars. After various manœuvres and battles, the Spaniards were checked in their progress, and, at the end of the campaign, they retired within their own borders. Lee acquitted himself honorably during this service, and on one occasion gained distinguished applause.

He was under the immediate command of General Burgoyne, who was stationed on the south bank of the River Tagus, opposite to the old Moorish castle of Villa Velha. This castle, and the village and plains around it, were occupied by the Spaniards. Discovering that a large part of their forces had been drawn off, Burgoyne formed a plan of attacking those that remained, which were posted on two small hills near the castle ; and he intrusted the execution of the enterprise to Colonel Lee.

After encountering considerable difficulty in

fording the river with a detachment of infantry and cavalry, concealed from the enemy by the darkness of the night, he continued his march through intricate passes in the mountains, gained the enemy's rear undiscovered, and at two o'clock in the morning rushed into their camp. A sharp conflict ensued. The grenadiers charged with the bayonet, and the dragoons harassed the bewildered Spaniards in their attempts to escape. They fought with courage, however, and made such resistance as they could. Several Spanish officers were killed while endeavoring to rally the men, and among them a brigadier-general. A body of horse collected and presented a bold front, but they were repulsed by the British cavalry. Before the dawn of day, the victory was achieved, and the enemy was routed in all quarters, leaving many slain and a large booty in the hands of the victors. The magazines were destroyed, four cannon were spiked, and nineteen prisoners, with sixty artillery mules, a few horses, and a quantity of valuable baggage, were conducted to the General's camp.

This spirited achievement took place on the 6th of October, 1762. Lord Loudoun, in his report to the ministry, called it a "very gallant action;" and the Count de la Lippe said, in a letter to the Earl of Egremont, "so brilliant a stroke speaks for itself."

Weary of the war, all the belligerents were now ready for peace. The strife ended with this campaign, in which the Portuguese, with the aid of their allies, had driven the Spaniards out of their country. The British forces were recalled to England, and Colonel Lee brought with him testimonials of his bravery and good conduct from the King of Portugal and the Count de la Lippe.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Projects a Plan for a Colony on the Ohio River. — Writes on the Affairs of the Colonies. — Goes to Poland, and becomes Aid-de-Camp to the King Stanislaus. — Visits Constantinople — Returns to England. — His Remarks on Politics and public Men. — Disappointed in his Hope of Promotion. — Returns to Poland by Way of Paris and Vienna.*

AMONG Lee's papers is found a scheme for establishing two new colonies, one on the Ohio below the Wabash, and the other on the Illinois, which appears to have been projected soon after the peace. A company was to be formed, and

grants were to be obtained from the King. It was a part of the plan to procure settlers from New England, and among the Protestants in Germany and Switzerland. In describing the advantages which he thinks could not fail to flow from these settlements, he discovers an accurate knowledge of the resources of the country, and of the facilities of navigation furnished by the great lakes and rivers of the west. In a political view, they would be important, protecting the old colonies from the incursions of the western Indians, preventing their intercourse with the Spaniards at the south, and opening a new channel of commerce through the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico.

The proposal was rejected by the ministers, who had adopted the policy of allowing no settlements in the territory beyond the Allegany Mountains. Experience proved, however, that this was a shortsighted policy, at variance with the interests of the government, and hostile to the prosperity of the colonies. A few years later, by the able interposition of Franklin, a company succeeded in obtaining a grant for a settlement on the Ohio; but the approaching troubles of the revolution prevented its execution.

Although baffled in this scheme, Lee continued to take a lively concern in the affairs of the colonies. He disapproved the plan of the minis-

try for prosecuting the Indian war, immediately after the peace of 1763, and reprobated the principles upon which this plan was founded. The germs, which gradually sprouted into the Stamp Act, had already begun to vegetate. The doctrine was now for the first time broached, that the army in America should be paid by the colonists, not merely for their own defence, but for the protection of Canada. Lee's pen was not idle on this occasion. He attacked the ministers and their measures, both in regard to the mischievous counsels to which they listened on American affairs, and to the policy which marked their designs.

"We are told," he writes, "that this country is under no obligation to be at the expense of maintaining an army for the support of Canada, the advantages of which principally, or indeed solely, accrue to our colonies. They ought to pay for it; they are able, but not willing. The first of these positions, if they who advanced it have conversed only with sailors, who probably judge of the abilities of the country in general by the opulent aspect of the seaport towns, may admit of some excuse; but, if they will take the opportunity to consult the officers of the army, who have any knowledge of the interior parts of the country, and who can have no interest in the affairs of the colonies but what affects the com-

mon cause of this country and humanity, they will receive very different accounts. They will be told that the settlers, even within a very few miles from the sea, are so far from being equal to the support of an army, that they require every kind of assistance and restorative which the mother country can possibly afford them."

He pursues the subject with particular reference to the misinformation of the ministers concerning the colonies, and to the system of military operations then pursued in America. He ascribes the cause to the false or exaggerated reports of interested persons, and especially to the baneful influence of Sir Jeffrey Amherst, for whose abilities and dispositions he entertained but very little respect. At this early period, Lee gives decided indications of his sentiments concerning the relations between the mother country and the colonies. Nor were these sentiments the result only of his experience and observation in America, but also of close research into historical facts. In a well written paper, he sketches briefly the colonial policy of the parent state from the first settlement of the country, bringing out all the prominent points with remarkable clearness, judgment, and precision.

For several years, the restless spirit of Lee had found ample room for exercising itself in the sphere to which it was peculiarly adapted, that of

the active operations of war. The scene was now changed, and the ardor of his temper would not allow him to be quiet. He plunged into the turmoils of politics with the same boldness and vehemence that he would have shown in fighting a battle, or assaulting an enemy at the head of his regiment; and this apparently from the mere impulse of his nature, and not from the desire of courting any party, or of seeking advancement in a political career. The measures of the administration, and the character of its distinguished leaders, became the themes of his pointed satire and scorching invectives, both in speech and writing, and at length the objects of his strong aversion and open hostility.

His secret motives, if he had any besides the burning fire of his own spirit, it would not be easy now to ascertain. His opinions, from whatever source they sprang, were openly avowed, and agreed in no particular with those which ruled in the counsels of the nation. His ideas of liberty and of political rights savored of high republican principles. The American contest was yet in embryo; but even at that time he evidently perceived symptoms of its approach, and gave no dubious indications of the part he was prepared to act.

Meantime, his military ardor did not subside. An opportunity offered, as he now thought, for

gratifying his ambition in this line on a new theatre. The distractions in Poland had brought that unhappy country to the verge of a war, and the friends of humanity were looking forward with hope to the possibility of her once more gaining her ancient independence, suppressing her internal dissensions, and averting the ruin in which her treacherous neighbors were plotting to involve her. Lee determined to embark in this cause, apparently as a soldier of fortune, without any definite purpose as to the side he should take. Action, the glory of arms, high rank in his profession, were probably the images that floated in his imagination and directed his course.

He arrived in Poland about the middle of February, 1764, having passed through Holland, Brunswick, and Prussia. Favored by the recommendations of the Count de la Lippe, he was received by the hereditary Prince of Brunswick "not like a stranger well recommended, but like an old deserving friend," and was furnished by him with letters to the courts of Berlin and Warsaw. He was charmed with the great Frederick. "Each time he was at court, the King talked with him more than half an hour, and chiefly on the topic with which he was best acquainted, American affairs." His Majesty was "totally unceremonious and familiar, and his

manner was such as to banish that constraint and awe," which the character of such high personages naturally inspires. He found other members of the royal family "extremely curious on the subject of America." After remaining a few days at Berlin, he hastened forward to Warsaw.\*

Poniatowsky, who had been recently elected King of Poland, with the name of Stanislaus Augustus, and who was one year younger than Lee, had passed some time in England before his elevation to the throne, and had gained many personal friends in that country. From some of these friends the British Colonel would naturally obtain good recommendations, since his military character stood very high, and he had given unquestionable proofs of superior talents and accomplishments. At all events, he was most kindly received by Stanislaus and the principal Polish nobility, and was soon attached to the person of the King, as one of his aids-de-camp. The particulars are described by himself, in a letter to Mr. Yorke.

"Your brother, Sir Joseph Yorke," he says, "received me in the manner I expected from your brother.† He gave me the warmest let-

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\* MS. Letter, dated at Warsaw, April 3d, 1764.

† Sir Joseph Yorke was at this time Minister Plenipotentiary at the Hague.

ter to Wroughton, our minister here, in whom I have experienced a real friendship, if friendship may be pronounced from the utmost pains, activity, and zeal, to serve me. In short, I shall not take the liberty to trouble you with the detail of my peregrination and progress, but inform you that his Polish Majesty has, from your recommendation, I believe contrary to the inclinations of many of those whom the constitution of this country renders it necessary to manage, declared me his aid-de-camp. He had it not in his power to provide for me in the army, as the republic raises no new troops, and those few they have are already disposed of. The army was the object of my ambition; and I hope you will believe me sincere when I say that, if I had not a good opinion of the King as a man, let my necessities be what they might, I would not have accepted a place about his person. But I really have a high opinion of him. He appears to me not in the least elevated by his great fortune; and the bearing well a sudden exaltation to power, wealth, or grandeur, I have always judged to be the ordeal of a good heart.

"As a King, he must be judged of hereafter; but, if a good understanding, a well disposed heart, and the education of a subject, promise well, the chances are for him. As a man, I really think him agreeable and accomplished.

He is easy, civil, and totally unceremonious. He is perfectly acquainted with our best English authors. Shakspeare is his god ; which, to me, is the test of every man's sense and feeling. But I should make a thousand apologies for expatiating on a character so much better known to you than to myself ; but I love the man, and am fond of the subject ; and likewise I think it may not be unsatisfactory to you to find that King Poniatowsky is not different from your friend Count Poniatowsky."

Such were his first impressions ; in regard to the personal character of Poniatowsky, they seem never to have changed. Lee bestowed an uncommon mark of his regard upon his Polish Majesty. In some way not explained, he had become the fortunate owner of a sword reputed to have belonged to Oliver Cromwell. This sword he ordered to be sent to him from England, as a present to the King of Poland, who, he observes, "though a King, is a great admirer of that extraordinary man."

The British aid-de-camp met with good companionship at Warsaw. He was honored with a place at the King's table, and an apartment in the palace of Prince Czartorinsky. This Prince had resided in England, could write and speak the language fluently, and was an admirer of the best English authors.

The state of affairs did not change, as he had hoped. The army continued on a limited scale. The distractions of the country, the growing spirit of disaffection to the government, became daily more formidable and alarming; nor was the power of the King adequate to raise or wield a force by which he could quell the agitation, or renovate the declining fortunes of Poland. A Russian army, like a hungry tiger, was prowling on the frontiers, fomenting discord within, and ready to seize and devour its prey whenever the exhausted strength of the Poles should afford a convenient opportunity. No man was ever placed in a more awkward or unnatural position than Poniatowsky. At heart a friend to his country, to her independence and liberties, he was betrayed, by his passionate fondness for a crown and the empty name of king, to be the instrument of her ruin in the impious hands of foreign despots. In abetting such a cause, Lee certainly cannot be regarded as acting upon his high republican principles. It may be presumed, that distinction in his favorite profession of arms was his ruling motive.

There are no means of ascertaining how he employed himself for nearly two years after his first arrival in Poland. In January, 1766, he accepted a proposal of the King to accompany

his ambassador to Constantinople, prompted more by curiosity than by any higher objects. After reaching the frontiers of Turkey, his impatience could not await the slow movements of the ambassador, and he joined himself to an escort of the Grand Seignior's treasure, which was annually sent from Moldavia. He soon had reason to repent of his rashness, for he narrowly escaped starving and freezing on the summits of the Bulgarian Mountains. So ill provided were his conductors with the articles necessary for such a journey, that several men and horses died of the cold. Overcome with fatigue and exhaustion, he at last reached Constantinople, where he remained about four months, and then returned to Poland, rejoiced that he had not been buried in the ruins of his dwelling by an earthquake, which threw down houses and destroyed many lives in the Turkish capital whilst he was there.\*

In December of the same year we find him again in England. He brought a letter of recommendation from his Polish Majesty to King George, which he presented with his own hand, reminding the King, at the same time, of the promise he had made in his favor to Lord Thanet three years before. General Conway, then Secretary of State, flattered him also with the expecta-

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\* MS. Letters from Constantinople, March 1st, and May 28th, 1766.

tion that something would be done for him. Lee sought promotion, and thought the interest he could make through his powerful friends, added to what he believed to be his own merit, would be sufficient to secure the fulfilment of his wishes. Weeks passed on, however, and he received no answer to his application; and his hopes were fed only by vague expressions of civility from men in power. The disheartening truth was finally impressed upon him, that he was not in favor with the government, and that it would be in vain for him to urge his pretensions any further. The cause of this disfavor has never been explained. It may perhaps be ascribed to his political sentiments, his opinions not only of public measures but of public men, and the extreme freedom with which he avowed them on all occasions. Whatever may have been the cause, his treatment seems to have operated with a peculiar power upon his sensitive mind, and to have produced a keen resentment both against the King and some of the ministers, which rankled ever afterwards in his breast.\*

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\* If he was the author of "A Letter to an Honorable Brigadier-General," as there is strong presumptive evidence for believing, it is not difficult to account for his want of success. The author of that performance had attacked the military character of General Townshend and Lord George

He appears to have contracted a warm personal attachment to King Stanislaus, and a correspondence was kept up between them. In a letter written to him from London, October 20th, 1767, we may perceive evidences of this attachment, as well as of his disappointment on arriving in his native country. He says, "The assurances your letter gives me of your good opinion and regard, I shall ever consider as the happiest, the most honorable circumstance of my life. They make ample amends for the enmities I have drawn upon myself from certain powerful quarters in my own country, where, perhaps from some just judgment of God, the same qualities which would recommend to your Majesty are highly obnoxious. I devoutly wish, and proudly hope, for my own honor, that I may ever possess a place in the esteem of your Majesty, and remain the aversion of those who so widely, so totally, differ from you." He then proceeds to answer the King's inquiries respecting public occurrences and public men in England, and describes in strong language the situation of Pitt, who had lately become a peer. He touches likewise on

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Sackville on such tender points, and with such polished keenness of sarcasm, as to render it impossible that he should be forgiven by the friends of those officers, or their supporters in the government.

American affairs. The Stamp Act had been passed and repealed during his absence.

"Nothing," he observes, "could make the American colonists cast off their obedience, or even respect, to their mother country, but some attempt on the essence of their liberty; such as undoubtedly the Stamp Act was. If it had remained unrepealed and admitted as a precedent, they would have been slaves to all intents and purposes, as their whole property would lie at the mercy of the crown's minister and the minister's ministers, the House of Commons, who would find no end to the necessity of taxing these people, as every additional tax would furnish the means of adding to their respective wages. If the humors, which this accursed attempt has raised, are suffered to subside, the inherent affection which the colonies have for the mother country, and clashings of interest one with another, will throw everything back into the old channel; which indeed is the case already. But if another attack of the same nature should be made upon them, by a wicked, blundering minister, I will venture to prophesy, that this country will be shaken to its foundation in its wealth, credit, naval force, and interior population."

This letter was answered by the King on the 20th of March, 1768. The following extract

translated from the original, will show the views of his Polish Majesty respecting the dispute between England and her colonies.

"If it be true that the great Pitt has become an example of human weakness, this calamity gives me the same kind of regret that I should feel at the overthrow of St. Peter's Church by an earthquake, because it would be the destruction of a model of perfection, or at least of human excellence. As I have not received the pamphlets concerning the colonies, which you proposed to send to me, I would ask again why it is, that the right of sending representatives to the British Parliament is not accorded to the colonies? Representation and taxation would then go together, and the mother and daughters would be indissolubly united. Otherwise, I see no alternative but oppression or complete independence. For the expedient of American Parliaments, or anything else of the kind, under whatsoever name it might be called, would only produce an opposition of interests between the colonies and England, as incompatible as it would be injurious to all parties.

"The English in America would then have the same relation to those of Europe, that exists in the seven United Provinces, which compose a federal republic, and whose government is so defective and slow in its operations, on account

of the equality of power between the seven little republics respectively. The worst of all would be, that it should become necessary for the acts of the Parliament of England to be approved by an American Parliament before they can be executed in America, which would make the latter paramount to the former. This would be the same abuse that is now seen in Poland, where the Dietine of Prussia arrogates to itself the right of confirming or rejecting what the Diet of the kingdom of Poland has decreed."

These ideas, if not entirely adapted to the circumstances to which they refer, evince a liberal turn of mind and a due regard for the political rights of men.

Lee wrote a letter to another friend in Poland, from which may be gathered his opinions of some of the actors at that time prominent in the councils of the nation. It was written during the first months of the Duke of Grafton's administration.

"A formidable opposition," he says, "is expected, but the conjectures on its success are too vague to be attended to. Some men of weight and reputation are embarked in it, but the heads are too odious to the nation in general, in my opinion, to carry their point; such as Bedford, Sandwich, Grenville, and, with submission, your friend Mansfield. He lately drew upon himself

the laugh of the House of Lords, making use of the word *liberty* of the subject, and expressing great regard for it. It was called Satan preaching up sanctity. Conway is still Secretary of State, and much regarded as a man of ability and integrity. Lord Shelburne, the other secretary, has surpassed the opinion of the world ; he speaks well, and is very distinct in office. The Duke of Grafton is an absolute orator, and has a fair character. An Irishman, one Mr. Burke, has sprung up in the House of Commons, who has astonished every body with the power of his eloquence, and his comprehensive knowledge in all our exterior and interior politics and commercial interests. He wants nothing, but that sort of dignity annexed to rank and property in England, to make him the most considerable man in the lower house.”

In writing to his correspondents in Poland, Lee could not forbear to make known the disappointment he had met with in his own country, and in his usual style of freedom, if not of rashness. His friend, Sir Thomas Wroughton, gave him salutary counsel on this point. He writes from Warsaw, April 29th, 1767, “I should have been heartily glad to hear, my dear Colonel, that his Majesty’s recommendations had been more successful in procuring you an establishment equal to your merit and wishes ; but I am not

at all surprised that you find the door shut against you by a person who has such unbounded credit, as you have ever too freely indulged a liberty of declaiming, which many infamous and invidious people have not failed to inform him of. The principle, on which you thus freely speak your mind, is honest and patriotic, but not politic; and as it will not succeed in changing men or times, common prudence should teach us to hold our tongues, rather than to risk our own fortunes without any advantage to ourselves or neighbors. Excuse this scrap of advice, and place it to the vent of a heart entirely devoted to your interest." Fortunate would it have been for Lee, to the last day of his life, if this advice had been heeded and followed.

What special claims he had to advancement, beyond those of other officers who had done their duty faithfully and bravely during the war, or whether he had been superseded by others of equal or lower rank, there are no means now of ascertaining. As the matter stands, it can scarcely be denied that he had a higher opinion of his claims, than his services and his just pretensions on this ground alone would naturally warrant. A better knowledge of the facts and his reasons, however, might exhibit the case under a different aspect.

After remaining about two years in England,

suffering frequently from ill health, he formed the plan of passing the winter in the south of France and in the Island of Corsica, and of returning to Poland in the spring, with the further design of performing a campaign in the Russian service. "I flatter myself," said he, "that a little more practice will make me a good soldier. If not, it will serve to talk over my kitchen fire in my old age, which will soon come upon us all."

He left London in December, 1768, with this project in view; but on his arrival at Paris, he met Prince Czartorinsky, who prevailed on him to abandon his southern tour, and accompany him directly to Poland. They travelled by the way of Vienna, where they waited two or three weeks for an escort, the frontiers of Poland being overrun with armed parties of confederates. In a letter from Vienna, he says, "I am to have a command of Cossacks and Wallacks, a kind of people I have a good opinion of. I am determined not to serve in the line; one might as well be a churchwarden." He arrived at Warsaw early in the spring.

## CHAPTER III.

*Appointed a Major-General in the Polish Army.—Enters the Russian Service, and performs a Campaign against the Turks.—Travels through Hungary to Italy.—Returns to England by Way of Minorca and Gibraltar.*

It is not probable that Lee had any other object, in entering the Russian service, than that already mentioned, practice in his profession. As the campaign against the Turks did not open so soon as he expected, he continued for some time at Warsaw. His situation there is thus described in a letter to Lady Blake.

“This country is the reverse of ours. They have an honest, patriot King, but a vicious nation. Our station here, I mean those about the King’s person, is whimsical enough. We have few troops, the bulk of these totally disaffected, and the town is full of ‘confederates,’ though not declared, far from being concealed. We have frequent alarms, and the pleasure of sleeping every night with our pistols on our pillows. I at present only wait for an opportunity to join the Russian army. This does not happen every day, as a strong escort is necessary, the communications being filled with banditti of robbers, who

are the offals of the confederates. I believe it will be but a ridiculous campaign, something like that of Wilkes and Talbot. The Russians can gain nothing by beating their enemy, and the Turks are confoundedly afraid.”\*

To his friend, George Colman, he wrote, at the same time, “If I am defeated in my intention of joining the Russians, I think of passing through Hungary, and spending the ensuing winter in Italy, Sicily, or some of the islands in the *Ægean* Sea. As to England, I am resolved not to set my foot in it till the virtues, which I believe to exist in the body of the people, can be put into motion. I have good reasons for it. My spirits and temper were much affected by the measures which I was witness of, measures absolutely moderate, laudable, and virtuous, in comparison of what has been transacted since. To return solemn thanks to the crown for manifestly corrupt dissipation of its enormous revenues and impudent demand on the people, and, to repair this dissipation, to complete their own

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\* In Langworthy’s “Memoir of Charles Lee,” this letter is said to have been addressed to Catharine Macaulay, the celebrated republican historian of England. But the editor of “Woodfall’s Junius” informs us that it was written to Lady Blake, which indeed is sufficiently obvious from internal evidence. Lady Blake was sister to Sir Charles Bunbury, and first cousin to General Lee.

ruin, is pushing servility farther than the rascally senate of Tiberius was guilty of. In this light it is considered by all those I converse with, of every nation, even those who have the least idea of liberty. The Austrians and Russians hoot at us. In fine, it is looked upon as the *ultimatum* of human baseness, a *coup de grace* to our freedom and national honor."

This freak of ill humor, in regard to the public measures of his native country, is seasoned with a spice of wit. Alluding to the confederates, and their acts of violence, he says, "It is impossible to stir ten yards without an escort of Russians. The English are less secure than others, as they are esteemed the arch-enemies of the holy faith. A French comedian was the other day near being hanged, from the circumstance of his wearing a bob-wig, which, by the confederates, is supposed to be the uniform of the English nation. I wish to God the three branches of our legislature would take it into their heads to travel through the woods of Poland in bob-wigs."

His political bias is likewise strongly marked in a letter to Lord Thanet. Speaking of the opinions of those around him concerning the transactions in England, he adds, "Such is the language of these people; and it is fortunate for me that they are ignorant of our American

politics. They can have no idea of our carrying our abominations so far as to disfranchise three millions of people of all the rights of men, for the gratification of the revenge of a blundering, knavish Secretary, and a scoundrel Attorney-General, a Hillsborough and a Bernard. Were they informed of these facts, their opinion of us would be still more mortifying." After these specimens of his freedom of speech, we cannot wonder at the prudent counsel of his friend Wroughton.

In a letter to his sister, written two or three months later, at Warsaw, in the summer of 1769, he thus speaks of his situation and prospects. "I have been in this place three months, waiting for an opportunity to join the Russian army. A very safe one will now offer in ten or twelve days. The present ambassador is to join his regiment, and he will have a strong escort. I am, happily, very well acquainted with him, and believe I am a sort of favorite of his. He is a good sort of man, with wit, knowledge, and courage; in short, a man of that stamp whose friendship gives one credit and pleasure.

"The King received me with the cordiality and goodness which I expected from his noble and steady character. He treats me more like a brother than patron. This week he intends

honoring me with the rank of Major-General. It is really an honor ; for although, amongst the Poles, many indifferent subjects, from the nature of the government, arrive at a still higher rank, yet the foreigners who have obtained it have been men of unexceptionable character in the services in which they have been engaged. This testimony of so excellent a Prince's esteem flatters me extremely. He is indeed an excellent Prince. He is worthy of being the chief magistrate of a better nation. I know a nation that is worthy of a better chief magistrate than it possesses. Could they not make an exchange ? ”

The honor upon which he set so high a value was conferred upon him, according to the King's promise. He was raised to the rank of Major-General in the Polish army, with the pay and establishment suited to that rank while he should reside in Poland.

He left Warsaw, as he had proposed, with Prince Repnin, the Russian ambassador, and proceeded, with a strong guard, to the frontiers of Turkey. When they arrived at the Niester, however, the army had already crossed that river, and advanced two days' march into Moldavia. They overtook the army just in time to be engaged in a severe action between the hostile parties. While the Russians were march-

ing through a ravine, their left wing, consisting of Cossacks and hussars, was attacked by fifty thousand Turkish cavalry, and driven back upon the infantry, who were thrown into confusion. They were rallied and formed with difficulty; but they stood their ground till reënforced by a second line of troops, who were stationed on the margin of the ravine.

After a sharp conflict, the Turks were at length forced to give way, and the Russians pushed forward to a more favorable position, where they formed an oblong square, to protect themselves against the furious assaults of the Turkish cavalry. These assaults were so warm and constant, that they were compelled to retreat, and to take post in a strong camp on the heights of Chotzim, near the city of that name. For some time they blockaded the city, and endeavored to batter down its walls; but their cannon were too small to effect this object; and, when the Grand Vizier arrived, with a hundred and seventy thousand men, and cut off their intercourse with the country, they were reduced to the inglorious necessity of abandoning the enterprise, and recrossing the Niester.\*

In a letter to the King of Poland, dated at Kaminiek, a town situate near the north bank

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\* Letter to Sir Charles Davers, December 24th, 1769.

of the Niester, opposite to Chotzim, Lee describes these operations, but bestows little praise on the address with which they had been conducted. They reflected little credit on the military genius or skill of the generals. The campaign had been useful to him, however, as adding to his knowledge and experience in the line of his profession.

For several months, he had been troubled with attacks of rheumatism, to which was now added a slow fever, brought on by bad diet and exposure in the army; and he determined to seek a restoration of his health, during the winter, in a milder climate. He proposed to try the waters of Buda, and crossed the Carpathian Mountains, on his route to that place; but he had scarcely entered Hungary, when he was seized with a violent fever, which compelled him to stop at a miserable village, where, for three weeks, his attendants despaired of his life. The strength of his constitution, however, sustained him till he was able to be removed to a more considerable town, where he obtained medical aid. Eighteen months afterwards, he speaks of still feeling the effects of his "Hungarian fever." Among his papers is a passport, dated at Cashau, in Hungary, November 29th, 1769, and signed "Esterhazy," commanding all persons to let him pass unmolested, and to as-

sist him in the prosecution of his journey. He passed the winter at Vienna, mingling in a society to which he became much attached.

At the approach of spring, he travelled southward ; and, in May, 1770, we find him at Florence, and two months afterwards at Leghorn. From this latter city, he wrote to a friend in Vienna, "I am making an experiment of sea-bathing, and I think it has done me considerable service. I shall try it some time longer, though not in this place, in which the relaxing society and conversation must certainly counteract the bracing qualities of the sea water. Why is not the sea at Vienna ? Or, rather, why am I such a blockhead as not to suppose that a society which gave me such satisfaction must be better, both for my soul and body, though the water is fresh, than salt water with conversation *sine grano salis* ? Believe me, I most sincerely regret my having left Vienna. I pay no compliment to it when I say I prefer it to all other places. I entreat you will assure the circle of our common friends of my idolatry for Vienna ; I mean the families of Herack, Schonbroun, and the Spanish ambassador. I cannot find terms to express my love and veneration for them. I must therefore beg you to assure them, that if they will encourage me by saying, through your channel, that they have not

already had too much of me, I will pay them another visit, and that, perhaps, a very long one."

Whether he realized this anticipation is not known. He remained in Italy during the summer, and is reported to have been engaged in a duel with a foreign officer, in which his opponent was killed, and he received a wound that deprived him of the use of two of his fingers. From Florence, he wrote to Sir Charles Davers, that he should, perhaps, embark with the Russian fleet for the Morea, if his health would permit; but he relinquished that project. In the winter following, he passed over to Sicily and Malta, for the purpose, as he says, of invigorating his debilitated health and spirits by sea-bathing in the cold season. Near the end of March, 1770, he sailed from Leghorn to Minorca, and thence to Gibraltar and Cadiz. He mentions a design of passing the summer at Spa, for the benefit of the waters; but it is uncertain whether he carried it into execution. At all events, he was among his friends in England before the end of the year.

No evidence has been discovered of his again visiting Poland. The increasing disturbances in that ill fated country offered no field for action in the service of the King. It is pleasing to observe, however, that he retained to the last the

same personal respect and affection for Stanislaus, that he expressed during the first months of their acquaintance.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*His Sentiments and Writings on political Subjects.*  
— *A resolute Friend and Defender of Liberty.*  
— *The Authorship of the Letters of Junius ascribed to him. — Discussion of that Question.*

SINCE he could find no opportunity for his congenial pursuit of using his sword, he had the more leisure for wielding his pen. In his own country he entered with his accustomed warmth into the controversies of the day, and furnished frequent contributions to the public journals. The blunders, abuses, and corruption of ministers, in his opinion, supplied an exhaustless theme, and he was never weary with assailing their schemes and their measures. His high principles of liberty, and republican tendencies, appear in all his writings. “Mr. Burke seems to inculcate,” he says, “that the salvation of this state is to be expected from the aristocratical part of the community; but I sincerely think nothing great is to

be expected from that quarter." Sarcasm, irony, pungent invective, and a considerable share of wit, are characteristic marks of his compositions. The freedom of the press was a favorite topic, both in England and afterwards in America. He held that the characters of public men are public property, and that no station, however high, should screen their abuse of office, their follies and vices, from the lash of indignant reprobation. This sentiment he did not forbear to illustrate practically with an unsparing license.

His hostility to every kind of arbitrary government, and to whatsoever tends to foster the privileges of a few at the expense of the many, often appears. Among the works, which he regarded as peculiarly incorrect and unjust in their political character, was Hume's "History of the Stuarts." The coloring and deceptive tissues, with which that acute and ingenious writer had contributed to clothe the conduct and policy of the kings of the Stuart race, and his plausible and disguised defence of slavish principles and tyrannical encroachments, were regarded by him as so many attacks upon the sacred rights of mankind, and as heaping reproaches upon the noble army of patriots, who had achieved the glorious revolution. In an ironical epistle, addressed to Hume himself, he mentions a project, which that work had suggested to him.

"I am so much in love with the scheme of your history," he observes, "I am so convinced that no task can be equally laudable in a philosopher, an historian, and a gentleman, as to endeavor to eradicate from the minds of our youth all prejudices and prepossessions against the memory of deceased and the character of living princes, and, by obviating the cavils and malice of republican writers, to inspire mankind with more candor in judging of the actions and government of sovereigns, that I am determined to follow so bright an example, and exert the utmost of my zeal, skill, and abilities (indeed far short of yours) to rescue from the unmerited odium under which they lie two much injured characters in history; I mean, the Emperor Claudius Cæsar, and his immediate successor, Nero, whose foibles and indiscretions have been swelled up into vices by the austerity and malevolence of Tacitus, Suetonius, and others, (the Rapins, Ludlows, and Macaulays, of those days,) who wrote under succeeding monarchs of different families. But, as the motives of such virulent proceedings are now ceased, and as men's minds ought to be a little cooler, we may venture to pronounce the disposition of those princes to have been good, though I do not think they were faultless, or altogether well advised."

He dilates upon the subject in a letter to a

friend, from which it appears that he had a serious intention of undertaking such a task, and of showing, that, by adopting Hume's manner of representing the motives and acts of Charles and James, it would be easy to prove Claudius and Nero to have been virtuous princes, aiming only to exercise their prerogatives, and the power intrusted to them by the constitution, for the good of their country. To what extent he prosecuted this design, his papers do not show.

He spent the spring and summer of 1772 in France and Switzerland, seeking a restoration of health by change of air and exercise. He rested two months at Dijon, and for some time at Lyons, and then proceeded to Lausanne for the purpose of consulting the celebrated physician Tissot. His chief complaints were rheumatism and gout; but his bodily frame was debilitated, and had recovered very slowly from the effects of the fever which brought him so low in Hungary. He complains that his spirits were variable, sometimes elastic and buoyant, at others depressed; and in this state of morbid feeling he is ready to believe, as he says in some of his letters, that his temper had altered for the worse. Indeed, he was ever frank and candid in confessing his defects. But, neither the energy nor fertility of his mind was diminished by the maladies of his body, and he employed himself during this tour

in writing his remarks on Hume's History of England.

The dubious honor of the authorship of the Letters of JUNIUS has likewise been claimed for Charles Lee. This intimation was communicated to the public twenty years after his death, in a letter written by Mr. Thomas Rodney, of Delaware. In narrating a conversation, which he had with General Lee in the year 1773, concerning these letters, Mr. Rodney speaks as follows.

"General Lee said there was not a man in the world, no, not even Woodfall, the publisher, that knew who the author was; that the secret rested wholly with himself, and forever would remain with him. Feeling in some degree surprised at this unexpected declaration, after pausing a little, I replied, 'No, General Lee, if you certainly know what you have affirmed, it can no longer remain solely with him; for certainly no one could know what you have affirmed but the author himself.' Recollecting himself, he replied, 'I have unguardedly committed myself, and it would be but folly to deny to you that I am the author; but I must request you will not reveal it during my life; for it never was nor ever will be revealed by me to any other.' He then proceeded to mention several circumstances to verify his being the author, and, among them, that of his going over to the continent, and ab-

senting himself from England the most of the time in which these letters were published in London. This he thought necessary, lest by some accident the author should become known, or at least suspected, which might have been his ruin.” \*

Mr. Rodney moreover expresses his own belief, founded on this conversation, that Lee was the author of the letters. This circumstance, the highly respectable character of Mr. Rodney, and the positive nature of his testimony, produced a strong impression at the time on the minds of many persons, both in the United States and England. General Lee’s reputation as a writer, a scholar, and a man of genius, the tone and character of some of his compositions, and his peculiar temper, were such as to afford a plausible groundwork for this opinion.

Public attention was soon drawn to the subject. Mr. Ralph Wormeley, of Virginia, who had known General Lee intimately during the latter years of his life, wrote a letter to Mr. Rodney, which was published, and in which he attempted to prove, that General Lee was so little acquainted with parliamentary history, and with the

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\* The letter from which this extract is taken was dated at Dover, February 1st, 1803. It was first published in the *Wilmington Mirror*, and in April of the same year it was copied into the *St. James's Chronicle*, London.

knowledge of other topics so ably discussed in the Letters of Junius, that he could not possibly have been the author.

Mr. Wormeley found an ardent and persevering opponent in Mr. Daniel Carthy, of North Carolina, who wrote a series of papers in the *Virginia Gazette*, aiming not only to confute Mr. Wormeley's argument, but to establish the position of Mr. Rodney by various testimony drawn from the writings of General Lee, his education, political sentiments, and connections in society. Mr. Carthy likewise had the advantage of a personal acquaintance with General Lee, having served under him as an officer in the American war, and, from this intercourse, having conceived a warm attachment to him and high admiration of his talents.

A writer in England, Dr. Thomas Girdlestone, attracted to the subject by Mr. Rodney's letter, published a pamphlet on the same side of the question. He rested his argument mainly on parallel passages, selected from the Letters of Junius and the writings of General Lee contained in the *Memoirs* published by Mr. Langworthy. The force of this argument being admitted, there was, however, a grave difficulty in the way, which Dr. Girdlestone was much embarrassed in removing.

It appeared, from the dates of some of Lee's

papers, that he was not in England, but in a remote part of the continent, during the publication of the larger portion of Junius's Letters, and it was well known that Junius, whoever he was, must have been constantly in London, or in the neighborhood of that city. To overcome this difficulty, it was necessary for Dr. Girdlestone to assume, that Lee purposely dated from a distant place his letters to some of his friends, who were in the secret, and who might show these letters, to prevent suspicion. The erroneous dates prefixed to many of Lee's printed letters gave countenance to this hypothesis. But, after all, the thread was too slender to hold the argument together, without a strong additional force, which Dr. Girdlestone could not command. He was more successful in meeting the objection of the many inconsistencies between the writings of Lee and Junius. To this he replied, correctly, that these inconsistencies are not greater than those in the writings of Junius himself, as exhibited in his different letters.

But there is no occasion to enlarge on this subject. The first letter of Junius is dated in January, 1769, and the last in January, 1772. From the manuscript papers of General Lee, it is certain that he was in Warsaw early in the year 1769, that he remained there during the summer, that he joined the Russian army

in the campaign against the Turks in the autumn, that he passed the following winter at Vienna, and the summer of 1770 in Italy. These facts are proved by the dates in his private diary, recorded in his own handwriting. Within the above period, more than half the letters of Junius were published, and some of them in such quick succession, and relating so exclusively to local events, that they could not have been written by any person absent from England.\*

It may then be asked, What is to be thought of Mr. Rodney's letter? The reader must judge. His own veracity is not to be questioned. He may have misunderstood General Lee's meaning, or have drawn a false inference from language that was left purposely ambiguous. General Lee's vanity might, perhaps, carry him so far. But the misconception may be explained in a different manner. It is well known that General Lee was a frequent contributor to the newspapers when he was in London, and engaged eagerly in the political controversies of the day. It is certainly possible, and even

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\* Dr. Girdlestone's pamphlet was published in 1807. It was followed by another edition, much enlarged, in 1813. The subject is discussed in the Preliminary Essay to "Woodfall's Junius," but the editor relies on the false dates contained in Langworthy's Memoir. See also the "British Critic" for September, 1807.

probable, that, after he returned to England, during the last year of the correspondence of Junius, he entered, among others, into the contest with that brilliant writer, by anonymous communications to the public journals. In his conversation with Mr. Rodney, he may have alluded to this literary warfare in such a manner as to connect himself with Junius, without absolutely intending to convey the impression of identity. This is no more than conjecture, however, and the reader must form his own opinion.

Whatever fortunes may have befallen General Lee during his travels, and in England, he seems neither to have changed his opinions, nor to have become reconciled to the policy of the ministers in regard to the colonies, or to the measures adopted by them for carrying out that policy. The high principles of political freedom, which he had openly avowed in his early years, were, in this instance, fortified by a conviction of right and a sense of justice. Such were his constant declarations, and there is surely no reason for doubting his sincerity, since these declarations conflicted with his personal interests, and thwarted all ambitious hopes, by interposing a bar to any promotion he might otherwise have expected under the auspices of the government. At length he became identi-

fied in principle with the American cause, and he resolved to make a tour through the colonies, whether with the design of establishing himself permanently in the country, or only of gratifying his curiosity by observation, it would be in vain now to inquire. It is probable, however, that, in case of a war, he had already determined what part he should act.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Arrives in America.—Travels in the Middle and Eastern Provinces.—Letters to General Gage and Lord Percy.—In Philadelphia at the Sitting of the first Continental Congress.—Dr. Myles Cooper's Pamphlet.—Lee's Answer.—His Account of the political State of the Colonies.—Embraces with Ardor the Cause of the Americans.—Visits Maryland and Virginia.—Purchases an Estate in Virginia.*

GENERAL LEE arrived in New York, from London, on the 10th of November, 1773. His old enemy, the gout, with which he was often afflicted, kept him a prisoner for some time after he landed; but, as soon as he was sufficiently

recovered, he began his travels to the southward. He made no secret of his sentiments or wishes in New York. "Your old acquaintance, General Lee," says Mr. Thomas Gamble, in a letter written from that place to General Bradstreet, "has lived with me for a month; more abusive than ever, and the greatest son of liberty in America. He has now gone to Maryland, to see Mr. Dulany. He extols the Bostonians, and wishes the rest of the colonies would follow their example."

After leaving New York, he passed five or six months in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, seeking everywhere the society of the political leaders, and attracting much attention by the zeal with which he espoused the cause of the Americans, his eloquent and fervid discourse, and the romantic renown which he had acquired by his European wanderings and military experience. The eccentricity of his manners, which led him sometimes to infringe upon the recognized rules of social intercourse, was regarded as the natural fruit of a brilliant though erratic genius; and his political principles were in such perfect accordance with the spirit of the times, and were poured into the ears of every listener with so much earnestness and ability, that he soon won the hearts of the people, and gained the confidence of all the prominent patriots

During the summer of 1774, he travelled through the middle and eastern colonies, as far as Boston. At this time, General Gage was in that city, as Governor of Massachusetts, and at the head of a British army. Although a friendship had long subsisted between him and General Lee, yet the latter purposely forbore to call upon him, or to show him any marks of personal respect. His reasons are assigned in a characteristic letter to General Gage.

"Whether it is from a cynical disposition," he writes, "or a laudable misanthropy, whether it is to my credit or discredit, I know not; but it is most certain that I have had a real affection for very few men; but that these few I have loved with warmth, zeal, and ardor. You, Sir, amongst these few, have ever held one of the foremost places. I respected your understanding, liked your manners, and perfectly adored the qualities of your heart. These, Sir, are my reasons, paradoxical as they may appear to you, that I now avoid what I heretofore should have thought a happiness. Were you personally indifferent to me, I should, perhaps, from curiosity, appear in the circle of your levee; but I hold in such abhorrence the conduct, temper, and spirit, of our present court, more particularly their present diabolical measures with respect to this country fill me with so much hor-

ror and indignation, that I cannot bear to see a man, from whom my affections can never be weaned, in the capacity of one of their instruments; as I am convinced that the court of Tiberius, or Philip the Second, was not more treacherous to the rights of mankind than the present court of Great Britain.

"I know not whether the people of America will be successful in their struggles for liberty; I think it most probable they will, from what I have seen in my progress through the colonies. So noble a spirit pervades all orders of men, from the first estates gentlemen to the lowest planters, that I think they must be victorious. I most devoutly wish they may; for, if the machinations of their enemies prevail, the bright goddess of liberty must, like her sister Astræa, utterly abandon the earth, and leave not a wreck behind.

"I know, Sir, you will do me the justice to believe that I am not acting a part; that no affectation has place in my conduct. You have known me long enough, I flatter myself, to be persuaded that zeal for the liberties of my country and the rights of mankind has been my predominant passion."\*

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\* At the beginning of the previous war, Gage had been Lieutenant-Colonel of the forty-fourth regiment, in which

In a letter written at the same time to Lord Percy, who was then stationed at Boston as an officer in the army, he expresses similar sentiments, and with equal freedom.

"Were the principle of taxing America without her consent admitted," he says, "Great Britain would that instant be ruined; the pecuniary

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Lee had served as captain. A few weeks before the date of the above letter, Gates wrote to Lee as follows. "Unless actions convince me to the contrary, I am resolved to think Mr. Gage has some secret medicine in his pocket to heal the wounds that threaten the life of American liberty. Surely a man so humane, so sensible, so honorable, so independent in his circumstances, and so great from family expectations, would never undertake a business fit only for an abandoned desperado, or a monster in human shape. I have read with wonder and astonishment Gage's proclamations. Surely this is not the same man you and I knew so well in days of yore." Again, a month later; "Be careful how you act, for be assured Gage knows you too well, and knows you know him too well, not to be glad of any plausible pretence to prevent your good services in the public cause." At this time Gates was residing in Berkeley County, Virginia, west of the Blue Ridge, having left the army, and purchased a plantation there, after the peace of 1763. He had been in the disastrous expedition under General Braddock, in 1755, as captain of an independent company; and, in the same expedition, Gage was Lieutenant-Colonel of the forty-fourth regiment. They were both wounded in the battle of the Monongahela, where Washington acted as aid-de-camp to the commander.

influence of the crown, and the army of place-men and pensioners, would be so increased, that all opposition to the most iniquitous measures of the most iniquitous ministers would be forever borne down. Your Lordship, I am sure, must be sensible that this pecuniary influence is enormously too great, and that a very wicked use is made of it. On these principles, every good Englishman, abstracted from any particular regard for America, must oppose her being taxed by the Parliament of Great Britain, or, more properly, by the First Lord of the Treasury; for, in fact, the Parliament and Treasury have of late years been one and the same thing.

"But, my Lord, I have besides a particular regard for America. I was long among them, and I know them to be the most loyal, affectionate, zealous subjects of the whole empire. General Gage himself must acknowledge the truth of what I advance. He was a witness, through the whole course of the last war, of their zeal, their ardor, their enthusiasm, for whatever concerned the welfare, the interest, and the honor, of the mother country.

"I think, my Lord, an English soldier owes a very great degree of reverence to the King, as first magistrate and third branch of the legislature, called to this mighty station by the voice of the people; but I think he owes a still greater

degree of reverence to the rights and liberties of his country. I think his country is every part of the empire ; that, in whatever part of the empire a flagitious minister manifestly invades those rights and liberties, whether in Great Britain, Ireland, or America, every Englishman, soldier or not soldier, ought to consider their cause as his own ; and that the rights and liberties of this country are invaded, every man must see who has eyes, and is not determined to keep them shut.”\*

Having made a rapid tour through the eastern colonies, Lee returned to Philadelphia in season to be present while the first Continental Congress was sitting in that city. He thus had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the members of that body, consisting of men from all parts of the country eminent for their talents and patriotism, convened to deliberate on public affairs, and to devise measures for obtaining a redress of grievances ; men of whom Chatham said, in Parliament, “I must declare and avow, that, in the master states of the world, for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wis-

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\* This letter to Lord Percy was published in London a few months after it was written. It is contained in Almon's *Remembrancer* for 1775. The letter to Gage was not printed till many years afterwards, and it first appeared in America.

dom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia."\* The enthusiasm of Lee, the heartiness with which he approved their proceedings and animated their zeal, his intelligence and ability, his decision and boldness, were suited to the moment, and all conspired to make a strong impression on the members of this Congress, and to prepare the way for future proofs of their confidence in so able and ardent a champion of their cause.

He had other claims, also, to their notice and consideration. In the midst of his wanderings, he had found leisure to employ his pen. His performances in this way were published anonymously; but their style, tone, and matter, betrayed their origin, which he probably took no pains to conceal. He was not a man to hide his light under a bushel, or to shrink from an avowal of his sentiments on all subjects before the tribunal of the public. Precipitate, sometimes rash, he certainly was; but this fault cannot be charged with selfish ends; it was the excess of a bold, frank, and fearless spirit. Timidity seeks disguise; selfishness works by cunning, craft, low intrigue, and pitiful appliances.

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\* Life of the Earl of Chatham, Vol. II. p. 404

With these stains the character of Lee was never tarnished. He uttered his opinions with manly freedom and self-confidence, and he was resolute in defending them. His writings in favor of American liberty, at this time, partake of these characteristics ; and, as compositions suited to the occasion, they have the additional merit of carrying conviction to the reader's mind, that they flowed equally from the head and the heart, pleading for justice and the rights of humanity.

Dr. Myles Cooper, of New York, a clergyman of the Church of England, had written a pamphlet entitled "A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans," in which the author entered into an elaborate defence of all the acts and all the claims of the British government in their proceedings towards the colonies. He was amazed only that the colonists should be so blind, weak, and obstinate, as not to see and confess, with humble submission, the lenity, forbearance, and parental kindness of their venerated mother, in her numerous acts of grace and condescension to her deluded children, who were now rushing headlong to their ruin. He argued from law, precedent, the prerogatives of the King, and the constitutional power of Parliament, as if he had been a great luminary in Westminster Hall ; and the result of the whole was the old doctrine of passive obedience. Charles the First

would have rewarded with a mitre so sturdy a advocate.

He discovered that Locke's reasonings on the subject of taxation were "weak and sophistical;" and he affirmed, that the tax on tea was no hardship, because the Americans were not obliged to buy the tea. Nor was the learned author content to rely on his logic and legal precedents alone. He must needs speak of military affairs, of the formidable armies of Great Britain, the skill and bravery of her generals, the experience of her veteran troops, and then contrast these with the undisciplined yeomanry of America, the want of generals, the want of military supplies, the want of everything that could give consistency or strength to an army. In short, no arguments were spared which could throw discredit upon the principles avowed by the colonists, reproach upon their acts, and odium upon their cause.

This pamphlet fell into the hands of General Lee. The cool effrontery and magisterial manner of the author in discussing important topics, of which he had no adequate knowledge, his utter hostility, in all points, to what the patriots deemed their sacred rights, and the slavish doctrines he maintained, naturally exposed him to severe and caustic attacks from his opponents. As a scholar and divine, Dr. Cooper stood high

with his party, who adopted him as a champion in the political field, for which he was ill qualified. Lee's reply is marked with the peculiarities of his other compositions. Sallies of humor, irony, and glowing declamation, are mingled with grave argument, facts, and apposite illustrations. The author's political disquisitions he despatches very briefly, as the reveries of a mind so imperfectly informed, or so deeply enveloped in the mists of prejudice, as not to require a serious refutation. He merely exposes them in their native deformity. His main battery is opened upon Dr. Cooper's military speculations, which he thought more likely to mislead the public; and here, standing on his own ground, he speaks with authority and effect, drawing a parallel between the armies which England could bring across the Atlantic and those which could be raised on the soil of America, both as to numbers and efficiency, much to the advantage of the latter, consisting of the yeomanry of the land, called out by the impulse of patriotism, and fighting for their firesides and their liberties.

This performance was well timed, well adapted to its object, and was received with great applause throughout the country. It unquestionably produced a strong impulse upon public opinion, and especially in confirming the wavering confidence of those, who had distrusted the

ability of the colonies to contend with the armies of England. One edition after another issued from the press; it was circulated widely, and read with avidity by all classes of people; and it soon raised its author to a high pitch of popularity. His genius, education, experience, military knowledge, and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of the colonists, were recommendations which were fully recognized, and in which was seen the promise of an able and resolute co-adjutor.\*

The impressions which Lee had received, after a residence of ten months in the country, are conveyed in a letter to Sir Charles Davers, dated at Philadelphia, while the first Congress was in session.

"I have now lately run through the colonies from Virginia to Boston, and can assure you, by all that is solemn and sacred, that there is not a man on the whole continent, placemen and some

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\* The tract was called *Strictures on a Pamphlet entitled A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans*, and was published in 1774. It is uncertain where it was first printed, but probably in Philadelphia. It was reprinted in New York, New London, and Boston, in a cheap form, for general circulation, and it was likewise inserted in some of the newspapers. In a bitter philippic by a Tory writer, under the title of *The General attacked by a Subaltern*, it is called a "boasted bulwark of faction," and the Whigs are abused for their active zeal in spreading it among the people.

High Churchmen excepted, who is not determined to sacrifice his property, his life, his wife, family, children, in the cause of Boston, which he justly considers as his own.

“ In every town in New England are formed companies of cadets, who are as perfect as possible in the manual exercise, evolutions, and all the minute manœuvres practised by the troops of Europe. The Boston company of artillery is allowed to be equal to any ; so that, in reality, they have drill officers sufficient to form an army of sixty thousand men ; and this number the four provinces can maintain, without neglecting the culture of their lands. I leave you to judge whether it is easy to dragoon this number, even if the other colonies should stand aloof. But they will not stand aloof. They will support them with their blood and treasure. The Canadians, it seems, are to be employed against them ; but if a single man stirs, they are determined to invite France and Spain to accept the prodigious profits which their commerce affords. They want nothing in return but arms, ammunition, and perhaps a few artillery officers as well as guns. And they certainly are to be justified by every law, human and divine. You will ask, where they will find generals. But I will ask, what generals have their tyrants ? In fact, the match in this respect will be pretty equal ”

With this extreme freedom in avowing his sentiments, and with the undisguised manner in which he took the part of the Americans, it is no wonder that his opinions, and reports of his conduct, should come to the ears of the ministers. He was an officer on half-pay in the King's service, and, standing in this position, he might naturally be required to forbear enlisting himself in the ranks of those, who were planning schemes for resisting the ministerial measures. Accordingly, on the 17th of October, Lord Dartmouth wrote to General Gage, informing him of the intelligence he had received concerning Lee, who, he was told, associated with the enemies of government in Boston, and encouraged a spirit of revolt. "Have an attention to his conduct," says the minister, "and take every legal method to prevent his effecting any of those dangerous purposes he is said to have in view."<sup>1</sup> It does not appear that General Gage was the author of this report, although in a letter to Lord Dartmouth, written a few days after Lee left Boston, he said, "It has been suggested that it was highly necessary to apprehend a certain number of persons, which, I believe, would have been a very proper measure some time ago, but at present it would be the signal for hostilities, which they seem very ripe to begin." This step was subsequently urged by the ministers; but

Adams and Hancock were the only individuals whose offences were declared to be of so flagitious a nature, as to drive them beyond the limits of his Majesty's pardon.

Lee remained in Philadelphia while the first Congress was sitting, and then went to Virginia and Maryland. In December, a convention of deputies from the several counties of Maryland met at Annapolis, to approve the proceedings of the Continental Congress, and to deliberate on public affairs. Lee was present at the meeting of this convention, and his counsels had much weight in stirring up the members to vigorous action, and particularly to adopt resolutions for putting the militia on a better footing, forming them into new companies and regiments, and supplying them with arms and ammunition. A plan for the new organization was furnished by him, and he personally superintended the arrangements for mustering the companies at Annapolis. He was delighted with the promptness and spirit shown by the Maryland convention, and exultingly contrasted its proceedings with what he called a "trick of adjourning and procrastinating" in some of the other provinces. At this same convention a lively sympathy was expressed for the suffering inhabitants of Boston, then deprived of their usual means of subsistence by the oppressive act of Parliament for closing

the port ; and the people of all the counties were requested to furnish contributions for their relief.

While at Annapolis, he wrote a long letter to Edmund Burke. After describing the condition of the country, the political views and temper of the people, and their military preparations and resources, he adds,

"I shall now trouble you with a few words respecting myself. I find it inserted in a paragraph of an English newspaper, that a certain officer (meaning me) had been busy in dissuading the people of Boston from submitting to the acts. It is giving me great importance to suppose that I have influence to urge or restrain so vast a community in affairs of the dearest moment. The same paragraph adds that I had offered to put myself at their head ; but I hope it will not be believed that I was capable of so much temerity and vanity. To think myself qualified for the most important charge that ever was committed to mortal man, is the last stage of presumption. Nor do I think the Americans would or ought to confide in a man, let his qualifications be ever so great, who has no property among them. It is true, I most devoutly wish them success in the glorious struggle ; that I have expressed my wishes both in writing and *viva voce* ; but my errand to Boston was mere curiosity to see a people in so singular circum-

stances ; and I had likewise an ambition to be acquainted with some of their leading men ; with them only I associated during my stay at Boston. Our ingenious gentlemen in the camp, therefore, very naturally concluded my design was to put myself at their head.”\*

About this time he made a visit to his friend Gates at his residence in Berkeley county. Gates had advised him to purchase an estate, then on sale in his neighborhood, which he described as an excellent farm, consisting of two thousand four hundred acres of land. This farm, he said, could be purchased for three thousand six hundred pounds sterling, and at this price he thought it a great bargain. In ten years, with proper management, it would be worth seven thousand pounds, besides yielding a liberal income annually in the mean time. Eighteen hundred pounds were required to be paid down, and the remainder by easy instalments. One thousand pounds would be necessary to provide stock for the farm, and to carry forward the improvements. Lee made the purchase, by which it would seem that he had already resolved to establish his home in America. This estate became the place of his future residence, except when employed in the public service, till the time of his death.

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\* Burke's Correspondence, Vol. I. p. 514.

Hitherto, General Lee had been continually gaining upon the affections and confidence of the Americans. On all occasions he was among the foremost in pressing vigorous measures and decided action. His enthusiasm was contagious, enforced as it was by commanding talents, and an earnestness which produced an entire conviction of his sincerity. His four campaigns in America had enabled him not only to understand the condition of the colonists, their political institutions and principles, but to study their character and habits; and thus he was qualified to adapt himself with remarkable facility to the circumstances in which he was now placed. It was not strange, therefore, that, as the time approached when all men saw that a resort to arms was inevitable, the public eye should be turned to him as one of the most prominent candidates for a high command in the service.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Lee appointed Major-General in the American Army.—Proceeds with Washington to the Camp at Cambridge.—His Reception by the Massachusetts Congress.—Correspondence with General Burgoyne.—Assists in reorganizing the Army.—Goes to Newport.—Administers an Oath to the Tories.*

THE memorable day at Lexington and Concord kindled the indignation and roused the martial spirit of the whole people. The events of that day had an electrical effect throughout New England. The blood of American citizens had been shed on their native soil. Men flew to their arms, and thousands hurried to the scene of action as if driven onward by a common impulse. When the British troops retreated from Lexington, they found an asylum in Boston, where the whole British force was stationed, under General Gage. Within a few days, Boston was surrounded by the militia of New England, under the command of General Ward.

The second Congress assembled at Philadelphia, and one of their first acts was to take into consideration the particulars of the affair at Lexington. At this time, very few persons in

the country expected a war; yet it was evident to all, that, after what had passed, a resort to arms was necessary, if they intended to vindicate the principles and secure the rights for which they had so long contended by petitions, resolves, and public declarations. Congress therefore immediately determined to assume the attitude of military defence, and to embody a Continental army, which was to be raised and supported at the common charge of the nation.

As a preliminary step, it was requisite that officers should be appointed to command the new army. Considering the relations in which the several colonies then stood to each other, and the circumstance that General Ward already commanded the New England army stationed around Boston, the task of selection was delicate. By a spirit of compromise, however, and by a wise policy on political grounds, the difficulties were in a great degree removed, and Washington was unanimously chosen Commander-in-chief. General Ward's position so clearly pointed him out for the next place in rank, that he was accordingly elected the first Major-General. Charles Lee followed him, and, on the 17th of June, 1775, was appointed second Major-General in the Continental army. Two other Major-Generals only were appointed at that time, namely, Schuyler and Putnam; the last being the only one of

the four who received the unanimous voice of Congress.

There seems little room to doubt, that Lee had at one time flattered himself with the hope of being preferred to the chief command; and probably there were persons in the country who had encouraged this hope. His military experience and eminent qualities were captivating to the multitude. But his foreign origin interposed an effectual bar to such an advancement, and it is not likely that any member of Congress entertained the thought for a moment. It is impossible that a single considerate American could have been willing to repose so responsible a trust in any other hands than those of a citizen born in the country. If Lee was not content with this result, there is no evidence of his having openly expressed dissatisfaction. On the contrary, he manifested a warm attachment to Washington, and coöperated for some time cordially in executing his plans; but occasional symptoms may be seen of his uneasiness at the superior rank of General Ward.\*

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\* The correspondence of the day furnishes a good index to the rumors that were afloat, and in some degree to the state of public opinion. The following extract is from a letter written by an unknown person in Philadelphia, December 26th, 1774, to a member of the British Parliament.

“The only design of this letter is to rectify some mistakes,

Before General Lee accepted a post in the American army, he wrote to Lord Barrington, Secretary at War in Great Britain, resigning the commission which he held in his Majesty's service; declaring, at the same time, that, whenever his Majesty should call him to act against the enemies of his country, or in defence of his just rights and dignity, no man would obey the summons with more alacrity and zeal. He condemned, in strong language, the ministerial measures against the colonies, "which he thought himself obliged in conscience, as a citizen, an Englishman, and a soldier of a free state, to exert his utmost to defeat."

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which have been transmitted to England, respecting the conduct of General Lee, who is now in America.

"The ministry have been made to believe, that the military preparations in the colonies have been recommended and taught entirely by that officer. Nothing can be further from fact. The Americans were determined to seal their love of liberty with their blood long before they heard of the name of General Lee. The people of Massachusetts were armed and disciplined before General Lee visited them, and the Congress agreed to recommend the study of the military exercises to the colonies without hearing a word on the subject from the General. It is a falsehood that he has offered to head our troops. He has too much knowledge of the world not to perceive that men, who fight for all they hold dear to them, will prefer men born among them for commanders to the most experienced foreign officers. Moreover, the colonies are not so wrapped up in General Lee's

In accepting his new commission, he made sacrifices, or at least exposed himself to hazards, which he afterwards found occasion to enumerate, and which may be stated in this place.

His property then consisted of an annual income of four hundred and eighty pounds sterling on a mortgage in Jamaica, and of two hundred pounds on an estate in Middlesex ; one thousand pounds in the stock of a county turnpike secured at four per cent ; fifteen hundred pounds on bonds at five per cent ; his half-pay, one hundred and thirty pounds ; and in his agent's hands twelve hundred pounds more ; so that his whole annual income was about nine hundred and forty pounds. He possessed likewise ten thousand

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military accomplishments, as to give him the preference to Colonel Putnam and Colonel Washington ; men whose military talents and achievements have placed them at the head of American heroes. There are several hundred thousand Americans, who would face any danger with these illustrious heroes to lead them. It is but just to General Lee's merit to acknowledge, that he has upon all occasions exposed the folly and madness of the present administration, and has shown the most tender regard to the liberties of this country." ALMON's *Remembrancer*, Vol. I. p. 9.

Another contemporary writer says, that General Lee "expected to be unanimously chosen to the elevated station of the supreme command." EDDIS's *Letters*, p. 237. But there is no evidence, that this writer knew what General Lee expected, and his declaration is only a proof that such an idea was in the minds of some of the people.

acres of land in the Island of St. John, with improvements which had cost him nearly eight hundred pounds; a mandamus for twenty thousand acres in East Florida; and a claim, as an officer who had served in America during the last war, for other lands on the Ohio, Mississippi, or in West Florida. Moreover, whenever he should choose to reside in Poland, he would receive, as aid-de-camp to the King, a salary of eight hundred ducats, besides the expenses of living suitable to that rank. "Such," he says, "were the fortune and income, which I staked on the die of American liberty; and I played a losing game, for I might lose all, and had no prospect or wish to better it."

This property was in the control of the British government, and, under the circumstances of Lee's defection from the royal cause, reasonable apprehensions might certainly have been entertained that it would be confiscated; yet, in the exuberance of his zeal, he ran the risk. It should be observed, however, that, although he did not stipulate for any indemnification, he nevertheless had a conference with a committee of Congress before he accepted his commission, and laid before them an estimate of his property. In consequence of the report of this committee, it was resolved, as recorded in the Secret Journal, that the colonies should indemnify General Lee for

any loss of property he might sustain by entering into their service.

He was in Philadelphia at the time of his appointment by Congress, and was thus prepared to accompany General Washington to the headquarters of the army, then at Cambridge. They began their journey without delay, and were escorted by a volunteer troop of light-horse as far as New York. While on their route, they heard the intelligence of the battle of Bunker's Hill. The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts was at this time sitting at Watertown, and provision was made for receiving the two Generals in a suitable manner, with public tokens of respect for their character and rank. A committee of the Congress repaired to Springfield, with direction to await the arrival of the Generals, and accompany them to Watertown. They were escorted from place to place by successive troops of horse, and were everywhere greeted with demonstrations of joy by the people.

On the 2d of July they reached Watertown, and General Washington was saluted by the Congress with a congratulatory address, to which he responded in appropriate terms. A separate address, similar in its tone, was likewise presented to General Lee. The estimation in which his merits were held by these legislators of Massachusetts, and the benefits they expected from his

services, are forcibly expressed. After announcing their "satisfaction and gratitude" at his appointment, they go on to say, "We admire and respect the character of a man, who, disregarding the allurements of profit and distinction his merit might procure, engages in the cause of mankind, in defence of the injured, and relief of the oppressed. From your character, from your great abilities and military experience, united with those of the Commander-in-chief, under the smiles of Providence, we flatter ourselves with the prospect of discipline and order, success and victory." This language is explicit; and, in fact, the attentions and marks of public respect proffered to him, at the time of his joining the army, were little short of those bestowed upon Washington himself. They furnish a proof of the extraordinary confidence with which he was regarded, and of the high position he occupied in the favorable opinion of the country.

A few days before General Lee accepted his commission in the American army, he wrote a letter to his friend General Burgoyne, then lately arrived in Boston. The reader will remember the campaign, which they performed together in Portugal thirteen years before, and in which they both gained applause. Burgoyne came out to take a command in the army under General Gage. This opportunity was seized by Lee to

expostulate with his friend on the part he was acting against the colonies, or, in other words, against what he regarded the sacred cause of liberty and right.

"I most devoutly wish," said he, "that your industry, valor, and military talents, may be reserved for a more honorable and virtuous service, against the natural enemies of your country, and not to be wasted in ineffectual attempts to reduce to the wretchedest state of servitude the most meritorious part of your fellow-subjects. I say, Sir, that any attempts to accomplish this service must be ineffectual. You cannot possibly succeed. No man is better acquainted with the state of this country than myself. I have run through almost the whole colonies from the north to the south, and from the south to the north. I have conversed with all orders of men, and can assure you that the same spirit animates the whole."

He is surprised that such men as Burgoyne and Howe should be willing to become the instruments of oppression in executing schemes so hostile to the free spirit of the British constitution, to every generous principle, to every noble virtue, and every sentiment of justice. He assails the ministry with his usual acrimony, assigns no better motives for their conduct than "despotism" and "vengeance," and declares his un-

alterable determination to join heart and hand with the Americans, in resisting these tyrannical encroachments upon their liberties. Before he sent this letter, he had the precaution to read it to several members of the Continental Congress.

These sallies of zeal and of indignant charges upon the ministry were taken in good part by General Burgoyne, who understood the head and the heart, the temper and principles, the eccentric humors and chivalrous enthusiasm of the man from whom they emanated. Six days after the arrival of the American Generals in camp, a trumpeter was sent out from Boston with an answer to the above letter. General Burgoyne recognizes the bond of friendship, and regrets that the vicissitude of human affairs should place them in any sense in the attitude of foes. He claims respect for his opinions, however, and the right of being guided by them in his conduct, and then explains his sentiments on the great points at issue between the two countries, and declares his unqualified approbation of the measures pursued by the ministers.

He argues the matter coolly, and touches upon the prominent topics, but with little novelty in argument or illustration. The weight of his reasonings rests on the pivot of parliamentary supremacy; but, like all other reasoners on that

side of the question, he overlooks the inevitable consequence, that this supremacy, carried to the length contended for, would authorize the Parliament to do wrong as well as right, and to compel submission equally to both, without any means of redress on the part of a people not represented. Against this monstrous doctrine the colonists took up arms, and demanded the privilege of judging for themselves when their liberties and property were invaded by a power claiming to be supreme, over which they had no control by representation or influence.

In conclusion, the writer solicited an amicable interview with his friend, flattering himself that such an interview might in its consequences tend to peace, and to the restoring to their senses "the unhappy deluded bulk of this country, who foresee not the distress that is impending." He proposed a meeting on Boston Neck, within the British lines, and requested his correspondent to name the day and hour, pledging his parole of honor for General Lee's safe return.

This proposal involved considerations of too much delicacy to be precipitately accepted. No one doubted his attachment to the American cause; yet, being a foreigner, and recently in his Majesty's service, his holding conferences with British officers, within the enemy's lines, however pure and praiseworthy his motives, would

naturally excite suspicions, and could hardly fail to be construed to his disadvantage. This view of the subject doubtless struck his mind, and prompted the resolution, so seldom taken by him, of calling the virtue of prudence to his aid. He sent the letter to the Provincial Congress, and requested their advice, expressing his wish, at the same time, that, if the proposed interview should be approved, they would delegate one of their body to attend him, and hear what should pass at the conference.

The subject was duly considered by the Congress, who replied, that, having the "highest confidence in the wisdom, discretion, and integrity, of General Lee," they could have no objection to the interview on this score; but they doubted its policy, and feared it would lead to unfavorable constructions of his motives and conduct, and thereby lessen the influence which it was important for him to maintain in his present station. They left the affair to his own judgment, however, and appointed Mr. Gerry to attend him, in case he should accede to the proposal. The question was likewise submitted to a council of officers in the army, who gave similar advice, and the project was abandoned. General Lee declined the proposal in a complimentary note to General Burgoyne.

For several days after their arrival in Cam-

bridge, the two Generals, with their military families, occupied the same house, one room being reserved for the use of the President of the Provincial Congress. This house was provided and furnished at the public charge, and continued to be the head-quarters of General Washington till after the evacuation of Boston. As soon as the army was arranged, however, and the Continental commissions were distributed, General Lee took command of the left wing, his head-quarters being at Winter Hill, near Mystic River, in full view of the British works on Bunker's Hill. The right wing, at Roxbury, was commanded by General Ward; the centre, at Cambridge, by General Putnam.

As no active operations of importance occurred during the season, the principal attention was directed to constructing fortifications, tactics, and discipline. In all these duties, and in his cordial coöperation with the Commander-in-chief, General Lee fully sustained his high reputation as an officer, and continued to establish himself more and more firmly in the confidence of the public. His knowledge and experience in military affairs were turned to good account, when the commissioners from the Continental Congress came to the camp, empowered and instructed to unite with General Washington in

devising a plan for reorganizing the army, and placing it on a permanent foundation. His influence was also exerted to assuage the discontents which existed among some of the general officers, on the ground of the rank assigned to them by the Continental Congress, and to persuade them to accept their commissions, and allow their personal feelings to be controlled by the higher principles of patriotism and public duty. On these points, his arguments and appeals flowed from a liberal spirit and mature judgment, and they were not without salutary effects.

About the middle of December, intelligence was brought from Boston to General Washington, that preparations were making to send off a body of troops by water, under General Clinton. It was naturally inferred, that this expedition was destined to the southward, possibly to Rhode Island or New York. Despatches were immediately forwarded to the authorities of those places, to put them on their guard. Governor Cooke, of Rhode Island, replied that Newport was in a very defenceless state, containing many avowed loyalists, or Tories, as they were generally called, and equally destitute of fortifications and troops. He requested that a detachment from the Continental army might march to Rhode

Island, under a skilful commander, and mentioned General Lee, as an officer who would be highly acceptable to the people.

No troops could be spared from the army; but General Lee set off immediately, with his guard, and a party of riflemen. At Providence he was joined by a company of cadets, and a number of minute men. With this small force, which was designed rather as an escort, in testimony of respect for his rank, than for any military object, he proceeded to Newport. He found the inhabitants in great dread of an armed vessel in the harbor, commanded by Captain Wallace, who had for some time held the town in awe by the terror of his guns, by his depredations upon the small craft in the bay, and his threats of vengeance upon the town, if he were not supplied with provisions according to his demands. The Tories also took courage under his protection, and set at defiance the authority of the legislature and patriotic committees.

It was not in the power of General Lee, with his small force, to repel these aggressions; nor did he make the attempt. During his short stay in Newport, he pointed out certain places most suitable for erecting works of defence, and gave such advice and directions as the occasion would permit.

His indignation was particularly bent upon the

Tories, whom he regarded as enemies to their country, and as deserving no forbearance. He summoned before him persons suspected of disaffection to the cause of the country, and required them to subscribe a very solemn oath, declaring that they would "neither directly nor indirectly assist the wicked instruments of ministerial tyranny and villany, commonly called the King's troops and navy, by furnishing them with provisions or refreshments of any kind, unless authorized by the Continental Congress, or the legislature, as at present established, of this particular colony of Rhode Island ;" and also that they would convey no intelligence to the enemy, and would inform against any one whom they should know to be guilty of such a crime ; and that they would take up arms, and submit to military discipline, when called upon by the proper authority, "in defence of the common rights and liberties of America." Colonel Wanton and two of the King's custom-house officers refused to take this oath, and it does not appear that any means of coercion were used. After completing this service, General Lee returned to the camp at Cambridge.

The policy of such an oath, administered under such circumstances, may perhaps be questioned. It might deter offenders through fear of detection, but it could scarcely weigh upon

the conscience, or soften the will. This step was deemed important, however, at the time, and was evidently approved by General Washington. When he communicated a copy of the oath to the President of Congress, he said, "General Lee has just returned from his excursion to Rhode Island. He has pointed out the best method the island would admit of for its defence. He has endeavored, all in his power, to make friends of those that were our enemies. You have, enclosed, a specimen of his abilities in that way, for your perusal. I am of opinion, that if the same plan was pursued through every province, it would have a very good effect." This language, whether he advised the oath or not, amounts to a decided approbation of the measure. General Lee himself seems not to have put much confidence in the oath as a check to the conduct of the Tories, but he regarded it as a test by which those who were inveterate in their hostility might be known. "I confess," he observes, "that men so eaten up with bigotry, as the bulk of them appear to be, will argue it is by no means obligatory; but, if I mistake not, it will be a sort of criterion by which you will be able to distinguish the desperate fanatics from those who are reclaimable."

## CHAPTER VII.

*Takes the Command in New York.—Alarm of the Inhabitants.—Enters the City with Troops from Connecticut.—His Plan of Defence.—Fortifies the City.—Takes Measures for seizing the Tories.—Appointed to the Command in Canada, and subsequently to that of the southern Department.*

THE sailing of a detachment of British troops from Boston continued to be a source of anxiety to the American commander. It was strongly suspected that they were destined for New York, where there were neither troops nor other means of defence. On Long Island also the Tories were numerous and bold, and a majority of the voters had refused to send delegates to the Continental Congress. These persons were in close alliance with Governor Tryon, who had taken refuge on board a man-of-war in the harbor of New York, and could easily furnish them with arms. The citizens and public authorities were restrained from resolute action by their fears of the armed vessels, which could at any moment batter down the houses, or lay the city in ashes, and which exacted a constant supply of provisions. A few months before, when the people

undertook to remove the cannon from the fort, Captain Vandeput, commander of the Asia, an armed ship of sixty-four guns, had fired upon the town and wounded several of the citizens. Thus exposed and intimidated, the inhabitants and provincial government of New York had abstained from all preparations in the city for annoying the enemy, or even for defence.

In a military point of view, New York was a station too important to the whole country to be neglected. By possessing it, the enemy would command the Hudson, and might open a communication with Canada, and thereby obstruct, if not cut off entirely, the intercourse between the eastern and middle colonies. General Washington was deeply impressed with the necessity of protecting New York; yet it was not in his power to detach an adequate force from the army under his command, without subjecting himself to the imminent hazard of being attacked and defeated in his camp. The provincial army raised in New England, and adopted by the Continental Congress, had been dissolved, the time for which the men had enlisted was just expiring, the regiments under the new organization were slowly filling up, and he was obliged to call in a body of militia as a temporary substitute.

The state of affairs demanded decisive and immediate action. Notwithstanding the tardy

and timid counsels of the authorities in New York, and their reluctance to take any steps for military preparations, it was believed that a body of volunteers sufficient for the occasion might be expeditiously raised in Connecticut, where the fire of patriotism burned brightly, and the martial spirit of the people was awake. Eager to make the experiment, General Lee solicited the command from Washington, with such instructions as would enable him to collect the troops and employ them, as circumstances might require, both for the defence of the city, and for disarming and securing the Tories on Long Island. "Not to crush these serpents," said he, "before their rattles are grown, would be ruinous."

Washington had no doubt of the importance of the measure, but, with his usual distrust of his powers, and his scrupulous caution not to exercise them beyond the strict intention of those from whom they were derived, a virtue which in the end contributed more than any other to the salvation of his country, he felt embarrassed, as to the course he should pursue. Congress had appointed him to the command of the American army; but did this imply that he should send troops to any point, and call on the local governments to supply men and means? As yet no such authority had been expressly granted. Lee would have cut the knot at once. "Your situa-

tion is such," said he, "that the salvation of the whole depends on your striking, at certain crises, vigorous strokes, without previously communicating your intention." Washington was perfectly satisfied that the public service required this latitude of construction; but how far it had been anticipated by Congress, or to what extent he could act in conformity with it under his commission, were questions not so clear in his own mind.

At this time Mr. John Adams, a member of Congress, was on a visit to his constituents in Massachusetts. His opinion was asked concerning the views of Congress, and the extent of General Washington's powers. With his accustomed promptness and zeal for his country's cause, he replied, that he regarded the authority of the Commander-in-chief as ample for the object in contemplation; that all the American forces were under his command, whether regular troops or volunteers, and that he was invested with full power to repel invasion, and act for the good of the service in every part of the country. Confirmed by this opinion of one of the ablest and most active members of Congress, who had himself been on the committee for framing his commission and instructions, the Commander-in-chief hesitated no longer, but immediately gave orders for effecting the enterprise.

General Lee left Cambridge on the 11th of January; 1776, attended by a small escort. He was instructed to proceed to New York, having collected volunteers on his way, and, when he should arrive there, to call to his assistance a regiment from New Jersey, and then to put the city in the best posture of defence which circumstances would admit, and disarm the Tories on Long Island. General Washington previously wrote to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, explaining the object of the enterprise, and requesting his coöperation. That ardent patriot, always foremost as well in vigorous action as in zeal and public spirit, immediately issued orders for raising two regiments by voluntary enlistment, each consisting of seven hundred and fifty men. Within two weeks the regiments were full, with an additional body of three hundred volunteers from Hartford county.

When General Lee arrived at Stamford, he was disabled by a severe fit of the gout, which compelled him to stop for a few days. Meantime, the news of his approach with an armed force reached New York. The people, panic-struck with the apprehension of immediate war, and trembling under the fear of hot shot and bomb-shells from the armed vessels in the harbor, were filled with consternation, and began to remove their effects from the town. The Com-

mittee of Safety, in whose hands the government then rested during a recess of the Provincial Congress, partook of the popular feeling, and expressed astonishment that troops should be marched into New York without their consent having first been obtained. They wrote a letter to General Lee, which he received at Stamford, deprecating all military demonstrations, which should disturb the repose of the city by provoking the hostility of the enemy's ships, and conjuring him not to march his troops beyond the confines of Connecticut, till they should have a further explanation of his designs.

In reply to this letter, which he called "wofully hysterical," he explained the objects of the expedition, and assured the committee, that there was no intention of committing hostilities upon the men-of-war, and that the whole design was to protect and secure the city, by preventing the enemy from taking post there, or gaining a lodgment on Long Island. No active operations of a hostile character were intended; and he adds, "If the ships of war are quiet, I shall be quiet; but I declare solemnly, that, if they make a pretext of my presence to fire upon the town, the first house set in flames by their guns shall be the funeral pile of some of their best friends."

He was convinced, also, that the enemy would

commit no such folly as that of burning the sea-port towns, which were their only strongholds in the country. "The menacing of destruction to them might indeed be of admirable use, but the real destruction of them must extinguish all hopes of success." Moreover, if Governor Tryon, and the captains of the men-of-war, were to prescribe what number of troops should enter the town, they must be regarded as absolute dictators, a humiliation to which he trusted the freemen of New York were not disposed to submit. To quiet the alarms of the people, however, and soothe the anxieties of the committee, he promised to take with him into the city a part only of his force, till measures should be adopted for its permanent security.

At the same time he despatched a spirited and excellent letter to the President of the Continental Congress, suggesting plans for the defence of the city, and above all for defeating the machinations of the Tories, by disarming them, exacting oaths of allegiance to their country, and confining such as continued obstinate and active in their opposition. He had no mantle of charity for the sins of these people. Their covert practices and secret alliance with the enemy rendered them more dangerous than open foes, who came with arms in their hands, and whose movements

inight be known and met in fair encounter. In his opinion, this poison of disaffection was to be eradicated without scruple or forbearance.\*

As soon as the movements of General Lee were known in the Continental Congress, three members of that body were appointed, at the suggestion of the New York delegates, to meet and confer with him concerning his plans and operation. They proceeded immediately to New York. Meantime General Lee, remaining ill at Stamford, ordered a regiment of Connecticut troops, under Colonel Waterbury, to march into the city. The colonel preceded his troops, and gave notice of their approach. The alarm of the Committee of Safety was now at its highest point; and moreover they felt their dignity a little wounded, as they conceived that no military officer could march troops into the city without their consent. Indeed, they had passed a resolution, declaring that all troops within the limits of New York would be under their control. They complained, hesitated, disagreed among themselves, and took no measures to provide for the regiment when it should arrive. Colonel Waterbury's patience was exhausted, and he told them that the troops were expected in a few

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\* The letter may be seen in Marshall's *Life of Washington*, Vol. II. Appendix, p. 64.

hours, and that he should at all events place them in the vacant barracks, where they must remain till he should receive further orders from his commander.

Just at this crisis General Lee arrived, having been conveyed from Stamford in a litter, which he caused to be constructed for the purpose. His presence, and that of the members of Congress deputed to meet him, contributed to assuage the rising terrors of the Committee of Safety. The conferences were harmonious and conciliatory. It was agreed that the town could not be fortified against the enemy's ships ; but it was proposed to erect batteries, at commanding points, of sufficient extent to contain two thousand men, and also on both sides of the narrow pass at Hell Gate. A fortified camp was likewise to be formed on Long Island, opposite to New York ; and military works were to be constructed in the Highlands, and guarded by a battalion. Such was the plan, and General Lee thought it judicious and complete. It only remained to carry it into execution.

General Clinton entered the harbor of New York on the same day that Lee arrived in the city. No troops came with him, and he gave out that his object was merely to pay a visit to his friend Governor Tryon, who was then on board one of the armed vessels. "If it is really

so," said Lee, "it is the most whimsical piece of civility I ever heard of. He informs us, that his intention is for North Carolina, where he expects five regiments from England; that he only brought two regiments of light infantry from Boston. This is certainly a droll way of proceeding. To communicate his full plan to the enemy is too novel to be credited." Yet, novel as it was, the intelligence proved to be accurate, as we shall see in the sequel.

The General lost no time in prosecuting his plans for the defence of the city. In this matter he had the coöperation of the public authorities; but on one point there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion between them. The armed vessels had hitherto been supplied with provisions from the shore. General Lee remonstrated strongly against this kind of intercourse, as incompatible with the relations in which the two parties stood to each other, and he desired to cut it off at once. The fear of the enemy's cannon, however, was more powerful than his eloquence, and he finally yielded the point, and the more readily as it did not interfere with the execution of his plans of defence.

At the southern extremity of the city stood an old fort, originally the work of the Dutch, and subsequently enlarged and maintained by the British colonial government. To this was

attached a battery facing the water, well lined with cannon, and the commander of the Asia had threatened destruction to the town if these should be removed. Regardless of this threat, General Lee ordered them to be secured. They were seized at noonday, and even the men and boys assisted, with wonderful alacrity, to remove them to a place of safety. From this circumstance he inferred, that the leaders only were timid and lukewarm, and that the people generally were as well affected to the patriotic cause as any on the continent.

He was disappointed in some of his expectations. The committee of Congress had agreed that five thousand men were necessary at New York, and he had flattered himself with the hope that this number would be provided; but his force never amounted to more than about seventeen hundred. It consisted of the two Connecticut regiments, one from New Jersey under Lord Stirling, and four hundred minute men. At this critical time the authorities of New York were extremely tardy in raising men, even for the protection of their own firesides; and although they permitted their neighbors to perform this task, yet they looked on with an apathy and indifference, which the ardent spirit of General Lee could not easily comprehend or pardon. This untoward state of affairs, how-

ever, seemed to have no other effect on him, than to sharpen his zeal and quicken his activity.

He began the construction of three redoubts on Long Island opposite to the city, which ultimately constituted a part of the works on the heights of Brooklyn. One regiment was employed in this service, and the other two regiments, and two hundred minute men, were stationed in New York. Another body of minute men, was stationed at Hell Gate, where they built a redoubt on the western side of the pass. He made no attempts to annoy the ships, but contented himself with erecting batteries and other works of defence. He pulled down the wall of the old fort next to the town, to prevent its being converted into a citadel by the enemy, and threw barricades across the principal streets near the water, and fortified some of them with cannon.

His zeal and energy, however, were not confined to these military preparations. He regarded it as a special and imperious duty to crush the spirit of disaffection by subduing or disabling the Tories, some of whom lurked in the city, and many others nestled on Long Island. Their names and characters were notorious. Encouraged by the presence of Governor Tryon, and the armed ships in the harbor, they were bold in their opposition, and took little pains to conceal their designs, as to the part they intend-

ed to act. The Continental Congress had already sent a regiment of New Jersey troops to Long Island, for the purpose of taking away their arms; but these could easily be supplied by the enemy. A resolution had likewise been passed, recommending to the provincial governments to seize the more troublesome and dangerous Tories, and authorizing them to call to their aid the Continental troops.

General Lee put a broader construction upon this resolution than it was probably designed to bear. The intention seems to have been, that the management of the Tories should be in the charge of the civil authorities of the provinces in which they resided, and not in that of the military, or even of the Continental Congress itself. This distinction was overlooked by General Lee, and he issued orders for seizing the Tories, and for tendering to them the same formidable oath, that he had prescribed to the disaffected persons in Rhode Island. In this proceeding he was borne out by his instructions from General Washington; but it was not satisfactory to the New York Congress, who were jealous of military interference. His firmness was not shaken by this jealousy, although he expressed entire submission to the civil authority in cases which did not conflict with the public service, or the positive duties of his command.

The unfortunate issue of the last campaign in Canada, and the fall of the brave Montgomery under the walls of Quebec, impressed on Congress the importance of appointing a successor to that general, whose character and talents should inspire public confidence, and afford the surest guaranty for future success. General Lee was selected for this arduous station about two weeks after he arrived in New York. The estimation in which he was held by the representatives of the nation may be understood by a letter from Mr. John Adams, who was then in Congress. "We want you at New York; we want you at Cambridge; we want you in Virginia; but Canada seems of more importance than any of those places, and therefore you are sent there. I wish you as many laurels as Wolfe and Montgomery reaped there, with a happier fate."

A few days afterwards, however, his destination was changed. Rumor and other indications made it nearly certain, that the enemy were preparing for a descent upon the Southern States. The detachment from Boston under General Clinton had passed in that direction, and there were reasons for expecting reënforcements from England destined to coöperate with him. To meet this crisis, General Lee was ordered to take command of the southern department.

He remained a month in New York, during

which time his vigilance and activity were unremitting. Considering the wavering temper of the provincial authorities, and the kind of horror with which they at first beheld his presence with an armed force, he deserves credit for the prudence and discretion with which he contrived to conciliate their favor and gain their acquiescence, if he failed to raise their zeal to the same degree of heat as his own. He was resolute and successful in effecting his military objects, although he forbore, as a matter of expediency, to insist on points of minor weight. Out of deference to the fears of some of the principal inhabitants, which he believed wholly chimerical, he had allowed the intercourse to go on between the enemy's ships and the city, under certain restraints; but even this license wore heavily upon his patience, and it is doubtful if he would have tolerated it much longer. The New York Congress sent to him a copy of regulations for continuing to supply the armed vessels with provisions, which he was desired to examine and approve. He replied, that "he was to resign the command to Lord Stirling that night; but, if he were to continue, he would not consent to supply them with any provisions, as they were at open war with us; that he hoped Lord Stirling would be of the same opinion; and that his instructions from the Continental Congress were

to use every means in his power for the defence of the city."

These differences of opinion, though they existed continually, did not mar or retard the progress of his main undertaking; and his works of defence, both in their location and construction, were allowed to have been judiciously planned and executed, and they were turned to good account six weeks afterwards, when Washington with the Continental army arrived in New York.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Proceeds to Virginia.—His Operations against Lord Dunmore.—Constructs armed Boats for the Rivers.—Recommends the Use of Spears.—Attempts to form a Body of Cavalry.—Advises the Seizure of Governor Eden.—Intercepted Letters unfold the Plan of the Enemy.—Removal of disaffected Persons.—Letter to Patrick Henry, urging a Declaration of Independence.—Enemy land in North Carolina.—He marches to meet them, and advances to South Carolina.*

GENERAL LEE resigned his command in New York on the 6th of March, 1776. After passing

a few days in Philadelphia, to ascertain the views and receive the instructions of Congress, he proceeded to Williamsburg, in Virginia, where he arrived on the 29th of the same month. Lord Dunmore, at this time, held possession of the waters of Virginia with a naval force. He had proclaimed martial law, offered freedom to the slaves who would rally under his banner, and, by threats or persuasion, had prevailed on many persons to embrace the royal cause and join his ranks. With this motley company of recruits, aided by his ships, he had committed ravages on the shores of James River, and Norfolk had been destroyed ; but he was thwarted in his attempt to burn Hampton, and was beaten in the severe action at the Great Bridge.

To repel these aggressions, the militia seized their arms, and hurried to the scene of strife. Regular troops were raised by the Assembly, amounting, in the whole, to nine regiments, which were taken into the Continental army. When General Lee took the command, these regiments, not then entirely filled up, were stationed at different points along the borders of the Chesapeake Bay, on a comprehensive plan of defence. A regiment from North Carolina had also come forward to aid in the common cause.

The principal attention was, of course, directed

to the motions of Lord Dunmore, whose little fleet was then at anchor in Elizabeth River, near Portsmouth. It consisted of the armed vessels Liverpool, Kingfisher, Otter, Roebuck, Dunmore, William, Anna, and about twenty tenders. The Liverpool carried twenty-eight guns; the others were of smaller force. To these were joined seventy or eighty merchant vessels, belonging to the loyalists, or prizes, with valuable cargoes on board, estimated to be worth one hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling. A small body of regular troops, a regiment of blacks, the marines, and the sailors of the trading vessels, constituted his strength for operations on land. Connected with the fleet was a camp on shore, fortified by an intrenchment, whence he obtained supplies of water.

The arrival of General Lee was hailed with joy by the inhabitants of Virginia, and especially by the Committee of Safety at Williamsburg, in whose hands the executive government of the province was then deposited, during the recess of the Convention, and at the head of whom was Edmund Pendleton. They manifested a cordial wish to unite and coöperate with him in every available plan for putting the military affairs of the province in the best condition, which circumstances and their means would admit. In his letters to his friends, he acknowledges their

noble spirit and vigilant activity, though he complains of their economy as cramping, in some degree, the expansive schemes which his burning zeal was eager to put in execution. His first task was to obtain reports from the officers at the several stations, detailing the exact state of the army, particularly from those in the neighborhood of Lord Dunmore; and next, to send out parties to reconnoitre and examine such places as were most accessible to the attacks of the enemy, or at which preparations for annoyance might be made.

Considering the number of creeks and navigable streams with which Virginia was intersected, he thought it extremely important that these should be guarded by armed boats; and he immediately applied himself to this object. Two weeks after his arrival in Williamsburg, he writes thus to Richard Henry Lee, then a member of Congress at Philadelphia.

"I propose fitting your rivers with twelve or eighteen-oared boats, mounting a six-pounder at the head of each, fortifying the sides with occasional mantlets, musket-proof, and manning them with stout volunteers, whose principle should be boarding. I am mistaken, when we are sufficiently provided with fleets of this kind, if a single tender will show itself in your rivers. I have already, for experiment's sake, sent out one

boat, armed and principled in this manner, on a cruise, and expect with impatience the issue. The men have their cutlasses and pistols, and seem to taste the project. I shall order twenty for each great river. The expense is trifling, and the spirit, the very principle of coming to close quarters, will naturally inspire the people with confidence in their own force and valor.

"Another great point I seem in a fair way of obtaining ; the conciliating your soldiers to the use of spears. We had a battalion out this day ; two companies of the strongest and tallest were armed with this weapon ; they were formed, something like the Triarii of the Romans, in the rear of the battalions, occasionally either to throw themselves into the intervals of the line, or form a third, second, or front rank, in close order. It has a fine effect to the eye, and the men, in general, seemed convinced of the utility of the arrangement."

On another occasion, he recommends the use of spears to the government of North Carolina. "As to arms," he says, "I believe it will be impossible to procure them, unless you have on the frontiers a sufficient number of rifles. For my own part, I like these for the battalions even better than muskets, particularly if you can conciliate your men to the use of spears. I never had, in my life, any opinion of bayonets. My

opinion may appear singular; but it is certain they never have been used, though we hear so frequently of attacking with bayonets." It does not follow that he preferred spears to muskets, even for any part of the troops, but only as a substitute for arms, which, at this stage of the war, could not be procured. To remedy this deficiency as far as he could, he sent officers to the interior of the country, to purchase rifles of the huntsmen.

His next effort was to raise a body of cavalry. Hitherto, little attention had been paid to this kind of force. In fact, Congress had done nothing, and the several colonies had gone no further than to encourage volunteers in a few instances. This neglect appeared to him so glaring, that he could not refrain from repeated and earnest remonstrances. It should be considered, however, that the Americans had never been accustomed to cavalry; the nature of the colonial warfare, in the midst of forests and in a broken country, did not admit of its use; and the opinion was still prevalent, that it could not be employed to advantage. To enlighten this ignorance, and correct these false impressions, he found was not within the power of argument, and he now determined to try the force of example. Without waiting the tardy process of bringing over the Committee of Safety to his

views, he resolved to appeal to the spirit and patriotism of the young men of Virginia, and to call on them to form themselves into volunteer companies of light dragoons, equipped for the public service. He published an address containing this proposal, and an explanation of his plan. The gentlemen volunteers, as they were called, were to receive no pay, but were to be furnished with rations for themselves and their horses. They were to be armed with "a short rifle carbine, a light pike eight feet in length, and a tomahawk." Such was the scheme in its nascent form ; but his command in Virginia was so short, that he probably had not the satisfaction of seeing it matured to the extent he had fondly hoped.\*

Whilst the commander of the southern de-

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\* There was a strange apathy on this subject in Congress. Richard Henry Lee, in a letter to General Lee, dated May 11th, says, "I find some gentlemen expressing dissatisfaction at your having promised forage and rations to such cavalry as might be assembled in Virginia." Again, "As a committee of Congress has already reported against having Continental cavalry in North Carolina, I suppose the same opinion will prevail respecting Virginia ; but the measure is so wise and necessary for the defence of our colony, that I wish and hope a few squadrons may be formed on colonial expense." Congress ultimately allowed rations and forage for volunteer dragoons in Virginia, not exceeding five hundred.

partment was thus employed in rousing and concentrating the military energies of Virginia, an event occurred which raised a loud clamor against him in Maryland. In the early part of April, a small vessel was taken in the Chesapeake Bay, which had been despatched by Lord Dunmore to Mr. Eden, Governor of Maryland, who was then at Annapolis. On board this vessel was Mr. Alexander Ross, the bearer of papers, among which were letters from Lord George Germain to Governor Eden. These were brought to General Lee, and they appeared to him, and to the Committee of Safety at Williamsburg, to be of a dangerous tendency, and to implicate Governor Eden in transactions hostile to the liberties of the country. In his opinion, and in that of the committee, the public interest required that Governor Eden should be taken into custody, and his papers seized, without a moment's delay. The letters were immediately transmitted to the Continental Congress, and at the same time he wrote to Mr. Samuel Parviance, chairman of the Committee of Safety at Baltimore, as follows.

"I conjure you, as you value the liberties and rights of the community of which you are a member, not to lose a moment, and in my name, if my name is of consequence enough, to direct the commanding officer of your troops at Annapolis immediately to seize the person of

Governor Eden ; the sin and blame be on my head ; I will answer for all to the Congress. The justice and necessity of the measure will be best explained by the packet, transmitted to you by the Committee of Safety from this place."

The Baltimore committee complied with this request, and sent a small armed force by water to Annapolis with an order to seize the Governor.

The Council of Safety at Annapolis, then the executive of the province, the Governor's powers being practically suspended, took umbrage at this proceeding, and interfered to prevent the execution of the order, not so much, it would seem, because they disapproved the measure, as because they conceived their authority to have been slighted by an application, without their knowledge, to a local committee. They passed resolutions reprobating with severity the Baltimore committee, and thereby casting censure upon General Lee, as the first mover. He wrote a letter to the council, explaining and defending the course he had taken, on the ground of the urgency of the case and of his not being aware that there were any troops at Annapolis. He claimed merit for performing what he believed to be a most important public service, and concluded by saying, "If the council think I harbor a wish to extend the military authority, or of trespassing on the civil, they do me

most cruel injustice. Although I was bred in the army, I thank God that the spirit of the citizen has been always predominant; and I solemnly declare, that, if I thought it possible that I should ever be intoxicated by military command, I would now, whilst I retain my senses, beg leave to divest myself of my present office, and serve as a volunteer in the glorious cause in which I have embarked my person, fortune, and reputation."

The Continental Congress showed in what light they viewed his conduct by passing a resolution, as soon as they received the intercepted letters, calling on the Maryland Council of Safety to seize Governor Eden. The council contented themselves, however, with exacting a promise from the Governor, that he would remain quietly at Annapolis till the Convention of the provincial representatives should be assembled.

In fact, it can hardly be doubted that General Lee had been in some degree influenced by a suspicion of the spirit and firmness of the Maryland council. The conciliating manners and private character of Governor Eden had drawn around him many personal friends, even among those who were foremost in abetting the revolutionary movements. The influence he had thus acquired was visible in recent transactions. The Convention had three months before instructed

their delegates in Congress to oppose any proposition for independence. The majority of the leaders in Maryland, strenuous for their rights, and arming for war, were still talking of conciliation, while the people throughout the land were crying out that the Rubicon was passed.

One of the intercepted letters from Lord George Germain to Governor Eden revealed a secret of the greatest moment. It stated that "an armament, consisting of seven regiments, with a fleet of frigates and small ships, was in readiness to proceed to the southern colonies." Its first destination was to North Carolina, whence it was to operate against Virginia or South Carolina, as circumstances might render most advisable. This intelligence was extremely opportune, since it not only unfolded the enemy's plan, but it allowed time for preparation. North Carolina had been assigned as the first point of attack, in consequence of the effective coöperation expected from the loyalists in that province, who had embodied and armed themselves the year before, and raised the standard of defiance. Their recent defeat and discomfiture, however, in the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, had left no room for this hope; and it was General Lee's opinion, that the theatre of action would be the Chesapeake, as obviously affording the most tempting inducements to the enemy.

At all events, it behoved the Virginians to be prepared for such a result; and General Lee, with his accustomed energy and zeal, devoted himself to this object. By his advice, the Committee of Safety resolved to remove all the inhabitants, with their cattle and valuable effects, from the two counties, Norfolk and Princess Anne, nearest to Lord Dummore's station, and place them beyond his reach and influence, in the interior of the province. It was found impossible, with all the guards that could be established, to prevent his holding intercourse with persons in these counties, and receiving supplies from them.

General Lee passed several days at Suffolk and Portsmouth, in the neighborhood of Dummore's fleet and camp, where he could obtain the best information, and adapt his measures in the most effectual manner to attain the end proposed. The order for a general removal operated as a heavy hardship upon many persons, against whom there was no charge of suspicious practices or sinister designs, and it was afterwards so far modified as to extend only to the notoriously disaffected and incorrigible. In a few instances, the houses of individuals, who were known to have rendered assistance to the enemy, were burned, and their property was seized for public use.

Whilst General Lee was thus engaged in providing for the defence of Virginia, he received information from the government of North Carolina, that a fleet with about three thousand men, under Lord Cornwallis, had arrived in Cape Fear River, and a pressing request that he would hasten forward and take the command in that quarter. General Clinton, with the detachment from Boston, had likewise arrived there, after having made a visit to Lord Dunmore on his way. Whatever might be the ultimate movements of the enemy, he could not hesitate to regard North Carolina as his present post of duty. As soon as he could make the proper arrangements, therefore, he proceeded to that province, leaving General Andrew Lewis at the head of military affairs in Virginia.

Just before his departure, he wrote the following letter to Patrick Henry, who was two months afterwards elected the first Governor of the commonwealth under the new form of government. It is interesting as an exposition of the sentiments of General Lee, and as affording hints of those of Patrick Henry, on the weighty subject of independence.

“ Williamsburg, May 7th, 1776.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ If I had not the highest opinion of your character and liberal way of thinking,

I should not venture to address myself to you; and, if I were not equally persuaded of the great weight and influence, which the transcendent abilities you possess must naturally confer, I should not give myself the trouble of writing, nor you the trouble of reading, this long letter. Since our conversation yesterday, my thoughts have been solely employed on the great question, whether independence ought or ought not to be immediately declared. Having weighed the argument on both sides, I am clearly of the opinion, that we must, as we value the liberties of America, or even her existence, without a moment's delay declare for independence. If my reasons appear weak, you will excuse them for the disinterestedness of the author, as I may venture to affirm, that no man on this continent will sacrifice more than myself by the separation. But if I have the good fortune to offer any arguments, which have escaped your understanding, and they should make the desired impression, I shall think I have rendered the greatest service to the community.

“The objection you made yesterday, if I understood you rightly, to an immediate declaration, was by many degrees the most specious, indeed, it is the only tolerable one, that I have yet heard. You say, and with great justice, that we ought previously to have felt the pulse of

France and Spain. I more than believe, I am almost confident, that it has been done ; at least, I can assert, upon recollection, that some of the Committee of Secrecy have assured me that the sentiments of both these courts, or their agents, had been sounded, and were found to be as favorable as could be wished. But, admitting that we are utter strangers to their sentiments on the subject, and that we run some risk of this declaration being coldly received by these powers, such is our situation, that the risk must be ventured.

“On one side, there are the most probable chances of our success, founded on the certain advantages which must manifest themselves to French understandings by a treaty of alliance with America. The strength and weakness, the opulence and poverty, of every state are estimated in the scale of comparison with her immediate rival. The superior commerce and marine force of England were evidently established on the monopoly of her American trade. The inferiority of France, in these two capital points, consequently had its source in the same origin. Any deduction from this monopoly must bring down her rival in proportion to this deduction.

“The French are, and always have been, sensible of these great truths. Your idea, that they may be diverted from a line of policy, which as-

sures them such immense and permanent advantages, by an offer of partition from Great Britain, appears to me, if you will excuse the phrase, an absolute chimera. They must be wretched politicians, indeed, if they would prefer the uncertain acquisition, and the precarious, expensive possession, of one or two provinces, to the greater part of the commerce of the whole. Besides, were not the advantages from the latter so manifestly greater than those that would accrue from the imagined partition scheme, it is notorious that acquisition of territory, or even colonial possessions, which require either men or money to retain them, are entirely repugnant to the spirit and principles of the present French court. It is so repugnant, indeed, that it is most certain they have lately entertained thoughts of abandoning their West India islands. *Le commerce et l'économie* are the cry, down from the King to the lowest minister. From these considerations, I am convinced that they will immediately and essentially assist us, if independence is declared.

“ But, allowing that there can be no certainty, but mere chances, in our favor, I do insist upon it that these chances render it our duty to adopt the measure, as, by procrastination, our ruin is inevitable. Should it now be determined to wait the result of a previous formal negotiation with France, a whole year must pass over

our heads before we can be acquainted with the result. In the mean time, we are to struggle through a campaign without arms, ammunition, or any one necessary of war. Disgrace and defeat will infallibly ensue ; the soldiers and officers will become so disappointed, that they will abandon their colors, and probably never be persuaded to make another effort.

“ But there is another consideration still more cogent. I can assure you that the spirit of the people cries out for this declaration ; the military, in particular, men and officers, are outrageous on the subject ; and a man of your excellent discernment need not be told how dangerous it would be, in our present circumstances, to dally with the spirit, or disappoint the expectations, of the bulk of the people. May not despair, anarchy, and finally submission, be the bitter fruits ? I am firmly persuaded that they will ; and, in this persuasion, I most devoutly pray that you may not merely recommend, but positively lay injunctions on your servants in Congress to embrace a measure so necessary to our salvation.

“ Yours most sincerely,  
“ CHARLES LEE.”

Eight days after the date of this letter, the Convention of Virginia instructed their delegates

in Congress, by a unanimous resolve, to propose to that body "to declare the united colonies free and independent states." The event proved that General Lee thoroughly understood the sense of the people. His suggestion, that the French court had no wish to acquire territory on the American continent, was also correct. This is demonstrated by the subsequent treaty of alliance, and by the public and secret correspondence of the French ministers during the whole period of the war.

The Virginia Convention voted to raise immediately eleven hundred and fifty minute men for the assistance of North Carolina. General Lee ordered one of the Continental regiments on the same service. North Carolina had raised five regiments on the Continental establishment, which were commanded by General Moore, and were stationed in such a manner as to be ready to meet the enemy, if they should attempt to penetrate the country. General Lee arrived at Newbern on the 27th of May, and was welcomed by an address from the inhabitants, in which they say, "Impressed with a lively sense of your generous and manly exertions in defence of American rights and liberties, we are happy in having an opportunity of paying our grateful tribute of thanks, and offering our most cordial

congratulations on your arrival among us." He was everywhere greeted with hearty salutations and with tokens of respect and confidence.

He received intelligence from General Moore that Sir Peter Parker, General Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis, were in Cape Fear River, with sixty or seventy topsail vessels, of which seven were ships of war, and that about three thousand men were landed near Fort Johnson. As yet, the enemy's intentions could only be conjectured. That they would operate in North Carolina, was not believed ; but it was problematical whether they would turn their course to Virginia or South Carolina. In this state of suspense, it was necessary to be prepared to act at both points. All doubt was soon removed ; for the fleet sailed out of the river on the 1st of June, and, three days afterwards, appeared off the harbor of Charleston. General Lee followed, and reached the city on the same day.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Takes Command of the Troops in South Carolina.—Preparations for Defence.—Affair at Fort Moultrie.—British retire from Carolina.—General Lee marches to Georgia.—Plans an Expedition against East Florida.—Recalled to the North by Congress.—Joins the main Army at Haerlem Heights.—Marches to White Plains.—Washington crosses the Hudson, and Lee left in Command of the Eastern Troops at White Plains.*

THIS invasion of the enemy had been anticipated by the South Carolinians, in consequence of Lord George Germain's intercepted letter, and they had prepared to meet it. The legislature had voted an army of four thousand men, and between two and three thousand were already raised. They were extremely active in throwing up fortifications around the city, and on the islands adjacent to the harbor, particularly on Sullivan's Island, situate within the bar, and most exposed to the enemy's shipping, where much progress had been made in a strong work of defence constructed of palmetto logs. The same zeal that was conspicuous in other parts of

the continent animated all classes of the inhabitants.

General Lee's arrival diffused universal satisfaction. His fame had gone before him, and everything was hoped from his talents, his ardor, and military knowledge. "His presence," says Moultrie, "gave us great spirits; he taught us to think lightly of the enemy, and gave a spur to all our actions." But he found himself in an unexpected dilemma. Not a single officer or soldier was on the Continental establishment, although Congress had, six months before, authorized three battalions to be raised in South Carolina, and had sent General Armstrong to take the command, who had been a month in Charleston.\*

The reason assigned by the Carolinians was, that they were not satisfied with the military regulations of Congress, and preferred their own system. In this state of things, no Continental officer, not even General Lee, could command the troops of South Carolina. To waver on such a point, whilst the enemy was at the door, seemed the height of folly; and Mr. John Rutledge, President of South Carolina under the new constitution then recently adopted, wisely settled the question by issuing an order, which

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\* General Armstrong's *Letter* to Lee, May 8th, 1776.

placed all the provincial troops under the command of General Lee; an act which met the entire approbation of the soldiers and the public.\* The army was joined by a detachment from North Carolina, and a regiment from Virginia, both of which had been ordered forward by General Lee, while on his march from the north.

From that time he was devoted, day and night, to the arduous task of preparation. The chief care was bestowed upon the fort at Sullivan's Island, which presented a fair mark to the enemy's fleet, and which it was presumed would be the first object of assault. The island was separated from the main by shoal water nearly a mile in width, and much labor was expended in the construction of a bridge, to serve for a retreat in case of disasters; but it could not be finished in season.

Colonel Moultrie, of South Carolina, commanded in the fort, and Colonel Thompson was stationed with a body of riflemen three miles distant, at the eastern extremity of the island, with the view of guarding that part against the descent of the British troops under General Clinton. Detachments were likewise posted by General Lee at Haddrell's Point, and other

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\* Moultrie's *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 151.

places along the main opposite to Sullivan's Island; but these were too remote to afford any direct assistance to the defenders of the fort. For several days the enemy's fleet remained on the outside of the bar, and General Clinton landed his men on Long Island, separated from Sullivan's Island at the east by a narrow passage, which was supposed to be fordable at low tide.

Such was the position of the two parties on the 28th of June, when, early in the morning, two men-of-war, the *Bristol* and the *Experiment*, carrying fifty guns each, six frigates, and a bomb-vessel, having passed the bar at full tide the evening before, sailed boldly up within cannon-shot of the fort, cast anchor, and commenced a furious cannonade. It was returned with equal spirit and unerring effect by Moultrie and his soldiers, affording an extraordinary instance of one of the hottest actions on record fought by men totally inexperienced, with all the skill, precision, and coolness of consummate veterans. The conflict continued for ten hours, till eight o'clock at night, without intermission, except for a brief space when the powder in the fort was nearly exhausted. As soon as a seasonable supply arrived, the fire was renewed. General Lee watched the action with intense interest at Haddrell's Point. He once passed over to the fort in a boat, stayed a short time, pointed two

or three of the guns, and then said to the commander, "Colonel, I see you are doing very well here; you have no occasion for me; I will go up to town again;" and then returned in his boat, exposed to the enemy's fire.\* He was too generous to rob the brave colonel of the glory of the day by remaining in the fort.

The victory was complete, and the more honorable as obtained over an enemy who had fought with the most determined resolution and bravery. At dusk Sir Peter Parker slipped his cables, and floated away with the tide beyond the reach of the guns at the fort. On board the *Bristol*, forty men were killed and seventy-one wounded; and the *Experiment* lost twenty-three killed and fifty-six wounded. The other vessels suffered less. The American loss was twelve killed and twenty-four wounded. Three of the frigates ran aground in attempting to enfilade the fort on the western side. One of them was scuttled and burned. General Clinton, finding the water in the channel too deep to be forded, could not land on the island, and of course his troops took no part in the action. Neither fortune nor courage was propitious to the assailants. In honor of the commander, the fort was thenceforth called Fort Moultrie.

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\* Moultrie's *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 176.

This repulse put an end to the scheme of a southern invasion, of the success of which the ministry had formed sanguine expectations. The fleet speedily sailed, with all the troops on board, to join the grand army under General Howe at New York. The blow was fatal to Lord Dunmore, who, destitute of the support which a southern victory would have given him, was soon compelled to cease from his depredations in the Chesapeake, and to withdraw likewise to Sir William Howe's army.

For several days it was doubtful whether the retreating enemy would not turn upon Virginia, and General Lee held his troops in readiness to march in that direction; but, as soon as it was ascertained that the fleet had passed the Chesapeake without entering, he formed the plan of an expedition to East Florida. The frontiers of Georgia had been infested by marauding parties from that province, and a post was established on St. Mary's River, under a British officer, which became the rendezvous of refugees from the southern provinces, vagrant negroes, and hostile Indians, who were furnished with arms and incited to plunder the inhabitants.

To break up and disperse this nest of marauders, which daily increased in numbers, and to strike terror into the Florida Indians by a vigorous onset upon that province, were thought to

be objects of special importance. The enemy held possession of St. Augustine, a fortress too formidable to be attempted without heavy artillery, which the Americans did not possess; but every other part of Florida was open to their incursions.

The plan was cordially approved by the prominent patriots of Georgia, and General Lee hastened to Savannah with the intention of carrying it into execution. He was followed by General Howe, a Continental officer of North Carolina, and by Colonel Moultrie, with detachments of North and South Carolina troops. There was also a Continental battalion in Georgia, which had been raised early in the year, and at the head of which was Colonel McIntosh. The command of the proposed Florida expedition was offered to Colonel Moultrie, and he accepted it on condition that he should be furnished with eight hundred men and the requisite supplies. The men were at hand, but there was a deficiency of almost everything else. The season in that hot climate was unfavorable; yet such exertions were made as to afford a fair prospect of success.

In the midst of these preparations, however, about the 1st of September, after General Lee had been a month in Savannah, he received an order from Congress requiring him to repair immediately to Philadelphia. The expedition was

then abandoned, the Carolina troops were recalled, and, with as little delay as possible, he pursued his journey to the north.

He had commanded in the southern department six months, and had been perpetually engaged in scenes of the utmost activity, which called for a full measure of military skill, ability, discretion, judgment, and knowledge of mankind. On all occasions he had acquitted himself honorably, with disinterestedness, and an unwavering devotion to the cause of the country. If his zeal and ardent temperament sometimes gave him the air of assumption, and impelled him beyond the exact limits of his delegated powers, it was soon discovered that his aims were for the public good, and that he never shrank from the responsibility of any of his acts.

Whilst he was at Savannah, he wrote a letter "to the Governor at St. François," describing the state of affairs in America, with arguments to prove the advantages that France would gain by an alliance in the war, or at least by furnishing arms and other military supplies, so as to secure the success of the Americans. The letter was ably written, and was probably designed for the French court, to whom he might naturally suppose it would be forwarded by the Governor.

By the resignation of General Ward, he was

now the second in command of the American army, standing next in rank to Washington. When he reported himself to Congress, he was directed to proceed to the camp at Haerlem Heights, where the main army was then posted, daily expecting an attack from Sir William Howe, who had a month before taken possession of New York. He arrived on the 14th of October, and took command of the right wing of the army.

The works on Haerlem Heights were strong and well manned, and it was hoped the attack would be made at that place. The British general chose not to hazard the attempt. Bunker's Hill was too fresh in his recollection. It was his policy to draw General Washington away from his stronghold further into the country, where he might meet him to greater advantage, or to enclose him between the Hudson and Long Island Sound by falling on his rear, and thus cutting off his communication with the interior. He had already begun to manœuvre for these objects, and had landed a large division of his troops on Frog's Neck, a peninsula jutting into the Sound about nine miles eastward from the American camp. At this moment General Lee arrived.

The post at Haerlem was so strong, including

Fort Washington, and the desire of Congress to maintain such a force there as to obstruct the passage of the Hudson had been so emphatically expressed, that a majority of the officers had decided a few days before that the army ought to remain in its present position, and act against the enemy as circumstances should dictate. A council was held on the 12th of October, however, two days before the arrival of General Lee, at which this decision was reversed, and it was agreed that the principal part of the army should march into the country, so as to keep in advance of the British columns, and that eight thousand men only should remain for the defence of the Heights.

In the mean time, a different face was put upon affairs by the movements of the enemy; General Howe's numbers at Frog's Neck continued to increase, and it was obvious that he intended to bring all his disposable strength to bear upon the American rear. Another council was called on the 16th, at which General Lee was present; and it was decided, with one dissenting voice only, that the whole army, except two thousand men left to garrison Fort Washington, should march across Kingsbridge, and so far into the country as, at all events, to outflank the enemy. General Lee was in favor

of this resolution, as indeed were all the officers but one.\*

In this matter, however, some writers have claimed for him more credit than the facts would seem to justify. It has been said, that the decision was obtained mainly, if not wholly, by his eloquent and persuasive arguments, strengthened by the unbounded confidence which the officers of the council reposed in his military knowledge and talents; and that by his agency, thus employed, the army was rescued from a most perilous situation. Whatever grounds there may have been for the previous opinions of the officers, it would seem obvious, that, at the time of General Lee's arrival in camp, when Sir William Howe was in vigorous motion, with the larger

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\* This officer was General George Clinton. Under the circumstances, his dissent was singular. He assigned his reasons, however, in writing. He was extremely anxious to prevent the enemy from ascending the Hudson, and to protect the country. He said the Americans were numerically as strong as the British, that the latter must be met somewhere, and that he believed the position and strong works of Haerlem afforded a better place for defence than any other.

Colonel Harrison, the secretary of General Washington, in writing to the President of Congress the day after the meeting of the council, and informing him of the resolution to march the army from Haerlem, says, "General Lee has strongly urged the absolute necessity of the measure"

part of his army, to gain the rear of the Americans, and cut off their communication with the country, the only course left for them was to retreat from their position. That General Lee should urge such a measure, was consistent with his character, and needs not be questioned ; but that it required much weight of argument to convince the Commander-in-chief, and the other officers, of its necessity, is not credible.

The attempt to retain Fort Washington, after the army marched from Haerlem Heights, has generally been regarded as the most palpable blunder, and its capture the most serious loss, that occurred during the war. The proceedings of the council on this subject have not been preserved ; but it has always been understood, and historians have not disputed the fact, that General Lee strenuously opposed the measure of leaving a garrison at that post. In adopting it, General Washington was influenced by two motives. The first and principal one was, that he had received a resolution of Congress, two or three days before, desiring him "by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution." This could not be done without a strong garrison. Secondly, the troops could at any time be withdrawn across the river, without hazard, by Gen-

eral Greene, who was stationed on the opposite side, at Fort Lee, or Mount Constitution.

Moreover, during the movement of the main army, the possession of this post, and of the other works on the Heights, was extremely important in another point of view. It interrupted effectually the direct channel of communication between the city of New York and the country, and held at bay about five thousand British troops between the Heights and the city, under Lord Percy, who, if the Heights had been deserted and the way left open, would have pressed heavily upon the rear of the Americans during a march already rendered perilous by the near vicinity of the main body of General Howe's army on their right flank.

The retention of Fort Washington at that time, therefore, was not so unadvised a measure as might at first appear. But when, several days afterwards, whilst the American army was at White Plains, a British frigate and two transports passed up the Hudson, notwithstanding the opposition presented by the chevaux-de-frise and the two forts, thereby proving that the navigation of the river could not be obstructed, it would seem that the garrison ought to have been immediately withdrawn, and the works on the Heights abandoned. This was the opinion of General Washington, which he strongly expressed

in a letter to General Greene ; but the hopes of the latter were too sanguine, and hence the loss of the garrison.\*

When the army marched from Haerlem Heights, the division under General Lee was stationed near Kingsbridge, in order to guard and protect the rear ; a position the most exposed to the enemy, and demanding the perpetual vigilance and caution of the commander. Nor was he contented with this duty only ; he harassed the enemy's outposts. Three several detachments from his division skirmished with parties not inferior in force, and with such success as to prove, in each instance, both the courage of the men and the good judgment with which these enterprises were planned. The movements of the army were extremely embarrassed by the deficiency of wagons and horses for transporting the baggage and artillery, whilst it was constantly open on its right wing to the assaults of the British columns, which were sometimes in sight. The march occupied three or four days. General Lee continued in the rear, affording an effectual protection, and at length brought up his division, and joined the main army at White Plains.

Washington here expected a general action,

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\* An explanation of the particulars may be seen in Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. VI. p. 328; Vol. IX. p. 100.

and was prepared to meet it; but, after looking him in the face for several days, Sir William Howe came to the conclusion, that the Americans were too strongly posted to allow him a fair prospect of success, and quietly drew off his troops towards Kingsbridge. As soon as his retreat was ascertained not to be a feint, no one could doubt his intention to transfer his operations to New Jersey, with the ultimate object of reaching Philadelphia. Washington resolved to cross the Hudson immediately, with all the troops belonging to the south of that river, and throw himself in the enemy's front, leaving General Lee with the eastern troops on the ground then occupied.

A detachment of three thousand men, under General Heath, was likewise ordered to Peekskill, for the defence of the passes in the Highlands. The number of troops left with General Lee was about seven thousand five hundred, but more than four thousand of these were militia, whose term of enlistment would expire very shortly. By his instructions, he was to cross the Hudson without delay, whenever it should be known that the British designed New Jersey to be the theatre of operations.

## CHAPTER X.

*Ordered to cross the Hudson and join the Army under Washington.—His Dispute with General Heath.—Marches into New Jersey.—Dilatory in obeying Orders.—Captured by the Enemy at Baskingridge.—Held as a Deserter, and closely confined.—Washington threatens Retaliation.—Allowed the Privilege of Parole.—Exchanged.—Resumes his Command in the Army at Valley Forge.*

THE fall of Fort Washington and Fort Lee opened the way for the anticipated schemes of Sir William Howe. He advanced into New Jersey. Washington retreated before him with an army daily dwindling away, by the expiration of the times for which the men had engaged to serve, till the number was reduced to less than three thousand. This critical situation required his whole disposable force to be united under his immediate command. He wrote to General Lee from Hackinsack, Newark, Brunswick, and Trenton, at first requesting him, and then urging and ordering him, to come forward with his troops as quickly as possible by such route as he might select.

General Lee was not idle at his post. He

laid a plan for cutting off a detachment of the British, stationed near Mamaronec, under Colonel Rogers, celebrated for his exploits in the border conflicts of the last war. It was partly executed, but ultimately failed, in consequence of the enemy having left the ground before the arrival of the Americans. He was also active in endeavoring to prevail on the New England militia to remain a short time longer, using such arguments as might touch their patriotism and kindle their ardor. Very few were moved by his eloquence, or by the perils of their country ; they nearly all went home.

As troops could overtake General Washington from the Highlands more expeditiously than from White Plains, Lee requested General Heath to send forward two thousand men, whom he promised to replace by an equal number from his own division. Heath declined, alleging the positive tenor of his instructions from the Commander-in-chief. This refusal bred an unpleasant altercation between the two Generals ; Lee insisting, that, being superior in rank, Heath was bound to obey his orders ; and Heath maintaining, that he held a separate command. Lee's sense of the matter was conveyed, without much show of courtesy, in two or three caustic letters to Heath, in one of which he says, with characteristic impetuosity, "The Commander-in-chief is now

separated from us. I, of course, command on this side of the water; and, for the future, I must and will be obeyed."\* These strong words were uttered without effect; Heath remained firm, and his decision was approved by Washington, who said it was not his intention to draw any of the troops from the Highlands.

Whatever motives may have caused General Lee's delay in the first instance, it is difficult to account for his tardiness afterwards. He lingered two or three weeks on the east side of the Hudson, and, after crossing the river with somewhat less than three thousand men, the militia having returned home, he proceeded very slowly, although continually pressed by messages from Washington to hasten his march. He advanced by way of Morristown to Baskingridge, where, on the 13th of December, ten days after he crossed the Hudson, he was captured by the enemy. The particulars of that event have been related by General Wilkinson, who was an eye-witness.

For reasons, which have not been explained, Lee took up his quarters for the night, with a small guard, at a house about three miles from the encampment of the army. A loyalist belonging to that neighborhood happened to pass the

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\* MS. Letter, dated November 26th. See also Heath's *Memoirs*, pp. 88-96.

house in the evening, and ascertained that the General was there. He communicated the intelligence to Colonel Harcourt, afterwards Earl Harcourt, a spirited British officer, at that time on a tour of observation in the country with a party of dragoons. General Lee had taken his breakfast the next morning, and just finished a letter to General Gates, who was then approaching from the north, with a body of troops, to join Washington. At that moment, says Wilkinson,

"I was looking out of an end window, down a lane about one hundred yards in length, which led to the house from the main road, when I discovered a party of British dragoons turning a corner of the avenue at a full charge. Startled at this unexpected spectacle, I exclaimed, 'Here, Sir, are the British cavalry!' 'Where?' replied the General, who had signed his letter at the instant. 'Around the house,' for they had opened files, and encompassed the building. General Lee appeared alarmed, yet collected, and his second observation marked his self-possession. 'Where is the guard? Why don't they fire?' And, after a moment's pause, he turned to me, and said, 'Do, Sir, see what has become of the guard.' I passed into a room at the opposite end of the house, where I had seen the guard in the morning. Here I discovered their arms, but the men were absent. I stepped out of the

door, and perceived the dragoons chasing them in different directions.” \*

The scene was soon closed. General Lee was mounted on a horse that stood at the door, without a hat, clad in a blanket-coat and slippers, and borne off in triumph to the British army at Brunswick.

In reviewing his conduct, from the time he was intrusted with a separate command at White Plains, it must be acknowledged that appearances are against him. As a military man, scrupulous in exacting obedience from others, it could not but excite suspicion that he should manifest so strange a backwardness in obeying the orders of his superior, especially as he possessed a perfect knowledge of the weak condition and extreme peril of the fugitive little army, which he was required to support. Washington, in one of his letters, expressed surprise that he had not heard from him for more than a week, although, he adds, “I have despatched daily expresses desiring to know when I might look for him.” And Congress, nearly at the same time, instructed a committee “to send an express to General Lee, to know where, and in what situation, he and the army with him are.”

It is moreover evident, that he had designs of

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\* Wilkinson’s *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 105.

his own, which were not consistent with a strict obedience of orders. It was his purpose to hang on the enemy's rear, and seize the first opportunity to strike a blow. On the 9th of December, he wrote from Chatham to General Heath, "I am in hopes here to reconquer the Jerseys; they were really in the hands of the enemy before my arrival." And, what must screen him from all suspicion of concealing his designs even from the Commander-in-chief, he conveyed the same idea in a letter to him the day before. Again, on the 11th of December, he wrote, "As General Lee thinks he can without great risk cross the Brunswick post-road, and, by a forced night's march, make his way to the ferry below Burlington, boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him; but this scheme he only proposes, if the head of the enemy's column actually pass the river." This was his last communication to Washington before he was taken prisoner, and it is remarkable as showing no disposition to comply with the orders he had received.

It may be said, and perhaps with justice, that these aberrations do not prove any ill design on his part, although they expose him to the charge of neglect of duty as an officer. He might believe, and probably did believe, that he could render the most effectual service by striking the enemy's rear, thereby retarding, if not entirely arrest-

ing, the progress of the British army towards the Delaware. That he had ulterior views can only be matter of conjecture, founded on his ardent temperament and aspiring ambition, which he never took pains to conceal. Hitherto he had discovered no symptoms of hostility to Washington, for the free remarks he had made concerning recent operations, and want of decision in the head, could scarcely be regarded as such. Any officer might innocently indulge himself in a similar latitude of opinion and speech. Whilst he was absent at the south, an intimate correspondence was kept up between them, as well of a private as of an official character; nor is there any evidence, that, after his return, he did not possess the entire confidence of the Commander-in-chief.

It is true, nevertheless, that the letter to General Gates, mentioned above, breathes a spirit not perfectly accordant with feelings of friendship or disinterested motives. He writes, alluding to Washington, "He has thrown me into a situation, where I have my choice of difficulties. If I stay in this province, I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. I have neither guides, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes, nor stockings. I must act with the greatest circumspection. Tories are in my front, rear, and on my flanks; the mass of the people

is strangely contaminated. In short, unless something, which I do not expect, turns up, we are lost. Our counsels have been weak to the last degree."\* Now, in reality, there was no choice of difficulties. He was ordered to join the main army, which he knew had crossed the Delaware ; and, by a quick march from the position he then held, he might in a single day have reached the river at a suitable crossing-place, without the slightest risk of being obstructed by the enemy, who were many miles below. He had no other task before him, than that of performing this march. As to the safety of the province, he was not required to protect it, nor was he answerable for consequences.

The capture of General Lee, at so critical a moment in public affairs, was deeply deplored by the army and by the whole country. Aside from the mortification of losing the second officer of the army in such a manner, the zeal with which he had embraced and sustained the American cause had won the affections of the people ; and his military reputation, especially his recent successes at the south, had confirmed their good opinion, and raised extravagant expectations of his future services.

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\* The whole letter is printed in Wilkinson's *Memoirs*. Vol. I. p. 108.

The circumstances attending his capture, however, and the negligence with which he seemed to expose himself to the enemy, produced a reaction in some minds, and excited unfavorable suspicions. How was it possible, it was asked, for a man of his experience and ability to place himself in a situation, where he could be seized by a handful of British dragoons, without even a show of resistance, unless he had previously resolved to become a voluntary captive, and had secretly concerted measures to this end with the enemy? In the vexation of a bitter disappointment, this suspicion, perhaps, was natural; but it was utterly unfounded. All the testimony confirms, that, up to the time of his capture, he was faithfully and assiduously devoted to the cause he had espoused.

Moreover, the treatment he at first received from the enemy affords a convincing proof of his having fallen into their hands by no good will on either side. Even the privilege of a prisoner of war was denied to him. Six days after he was brought to the British camp, Sir William Howe wrote to the minister, Lord George Germain, as follows. "General Lee, being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner; but I do not bring him to trial, as a doubt has arisen whether, by a public resignation of his half-pay, prior to his entry into the

rebel army, he is still amenable to the military law as a deserter; upon which point I wait for information; and if the decision should be for trial on this ground, I beg to have the judges' opinion to lay before the court. Deserters are excluded in my agreement with the enemy for exchange of prisoners." The minister replied, "As you have difficulties about bringing General Lee to trial in America, it is his Majesty's pleasure, that you send him to Great Britain by the first ship of war." The manner of his treatment was soon rumored abroad, and produced a strong sensation in the American army and people. General Washington partook of the common feeling, and felt it to be his duty to remonstrate and threaten retaliation.

"I am directed by Congress," he says, in a letter to General Howe, "to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers, taken at Trenton, for Major-General Lee; or, if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, from good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service, as his resignation was never accept-

ed, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves; but I must give you warning, that Major-General Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of, the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit on his life or liberty will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies, at present in our hands."

Sir William Howe's answer was brief, couched in general terms, and unsatisfactory, promising only that the proceedings against General Lee "should not be precipitated." These words implied, that proceedings of some sort were intended. Congress immediately ordered five Hessian field-officers, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, then a prisoner in Boston, to be taken into close custody, avowing the determination to retaliate on them the same punishment that should be inflicted on General Lee. This order was executed; the Hessian officers were closely confined; and Colonel Campbell was thrown into a common jail at Concord, and treated in a manner reflecting no credit on the generous feelings of those who had him in charge, however it might evince their zeal for the honor and

safety of their unfortunate general in the hands of the enemy.

Colonel Campbell was released from his harsh duress by the interference of Washington, who, in fact, did not approve the rigid construction which had been put upon the order of Congress, and who had no other aim than to retain the officers in custody, without the privilege of exchange, till the final decision of General Lee's case should be known.

In this state of things, Sir William Howe wrote again to the minister in a somewhat altered tone. "Washington declines to exchange the Hessian field-officers, taken at Trenton, or Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, unless Lee is recognized as a prisoner of war. Lee is therefore retained for further instructions, being apprehensive, that a close confinement of the Hessian officers would be the consequence of sending Lee to Britain, and that this would occasion much discontent among the foreign troops." The minister took counsel of prudence, and replied, "His Majesty consents that Lee, having been struck off the half-pay list, shall, though deserving the most exemplary punishment, be deemed a prisoner of war, and he may be exchanged as such when you may think proper." This was nine months after General Lee's capture, during which time his fate was held in

suspense ; and it is evident, from the above extracts, that he owed his rescue to the firm stand taken in his behalf by the American Congress and the Commander-in-chief.

Justice to the character of General Howe requires it to be stated, however, that the rumor of his harsh treatment was unfounded. Although Lee was not permitted to go abroad on parole, yet he was furnished with comfortable apartments ; and, in a letter written by his own hand to Robert Morris, then a member of Congress, he says, “I have no occasion for money at present, as my table is very handsomely kept by the General, who has, indeed, treated me in all respects with kindness, generosity, and tenderness.” When this letter was read in Congress, a resolve was passed directing the Hessian officers to be treated in the same manner.

In consequence of Lord George Germain’s last letter, General Lee was permitted to go abroad, on parole, anywhere within the limits of New York. Some time afterwards, he was transferred to Philadelphia, then in possession of the British. Here, on the 5th of April, 1778, his parole was enlarged, granting him liberty to go into the country beyond the British lines. He was exchanged early in the month of May, when he joined the American army at Valley Forge.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Battle of Monmouth.—Lee opposes a general Action in a Council of War.—Takes Command of the advanced Division.—Engages the Enemy.—Retreats.—Interview with Washington.*

ABOUT the middle of June, the British evacuated Philadelphia, and Sir Henry Clinton began his march across New Jersey. His motions were, of course, closely watched by the Americans; and, without delay, Washington crossed the Delaware above Trenton. On the 24th of June, he arrived with his whole army at Hopewell, in New Jersey. On that day, a council of war was held, with the view of ascertaining the opinions of the officers as to future operations.

At the opening of the council, the Commander-in-chief stated the force of the enemy, according to the best information he could obtain, to be about ten thousand men. His own force then in camp amounted to ten thousand six hundred and eighty-four, rank and file, besides an advanced brigade of twelve hundred regular troops, and about the same number of militia, posted near the enemy, and hovering on their flanks and rear. In seven days, the retreating

army had advanced only forty miles, their march having been retarded by breaking down the bridges and felling trees across the roads. Several questions were then propounded to the council, of which the one of chief importance was, "Will it be advisable for us, of choice, to hazard a general action?" A warm debate ensued; but, in the end, this question was decided in the negative by a majority of the officers. The opinion was nearly unanimous, however, that a detachment of fifteen hundred men should be sent to coöperate with those already near the enemy, in harassing their rear and flanks, and acting as circumstances might require.

Lee was strenuously opposed to a general action, on the ground of the disparity between the experience and discipline of the British troops and those who then composed the American army. His opinion was supposed to have much influence with some of the other officers. No one urged a general action, at all events; but several of them were of opinion, that such arrangements should be made as might bring it on, if a favorable opportunity should present itself.

Immediately after the council had dissolved, Greene, Lafayette, and Wayne, wrote separately to the Commander-in-chief, dissenting from the decision which a majority had approved, and giv-

ing their reasons for acting with more vigor. "I cannot help thinking," said Greene, "that we magnify our difficulties beyond realities. We are now in the most awkward situation in the world. We have come with great rapidity, until we have got near the enemy, and then our courage failed us, and we halted without attempting to do the enemy the least injury. People expect something from us, and our strength demands it. I am by no means for rash measures; but we must preserve our reputation. We can make a very serious impression without any great risk; and, if it should come to a general action, the chance is greatly in our favor."

Lafayette expressed similar sentiments, in language not less forcible. He recommended that at least twenty-five hundred or three thousand men should be sent to reënforce those already on the enemy's flanks and rear; and, if they should bring on a general engagement, he could not see why, "with ten thousand men, it was not proper to attack ten thousand English." Steuben, Du Portail, Wayne, and Paterson, accorded in these views; so that half of the whole number of general officers were in favor of bringing the enemy to an action, if circumstances should lead to such a result, although none of them seemed to consider it advisable to make a direct assault with that aim.

The Commander-in-chief was rather embarrassed than assisted by the council. After it was over, he probably agreed in opinion with Lafayette, who regretted that a council of war had been called, believing it not to have been "consistent with the good of the service, the advantage of the occasion, or, indeed, the authority of the Commander-in-chief." Washington was well aware that the public would never be satisfied, if, with a force superior in numbers to that of the enemy, he should suffer Sir Henry Clinton to march through the country, without attempting, at least, to strike such a blow as his strength would seem to justify. As the weight of responsibility rested on him, the counsels of his officers might guide his judgment, but not control his acts. He resolved to send out such a detachment as would harass the enemy, and check their progress, whilst, at the same time, he should march in person with the main body of his army, and take a position from which he could bring the whole into action, if an occasion should offer.

The command of the advanced troops belonged, of right, to General Lee. Disapproving the object, he manifested no eagerness to occupy this post of honor due to his rank; nor did he hesitate to avow his conviction of the inexpediency of the plan, and of the ill conse-

quences that would follow. At the solicitation of Lafayette, therefore, he consented to resign the command to that ardent and enterprising officer, who, with the approbation of Washington, was placed at the head of the advanced troops.

After a little time for reflection, however, General Lee changed his mind. In a letter to the Commander-in-chief, the next day, he says, "When I first assented to the Marquis de Lafayette's taking command of the present detachment, I confess I viewed it in a very different light from that in which I view it at present. I considered it as a more proper business of a young, volunteering General, than of the second in command in the army; but I find it is considered in a different manner. They say that a corps, consisting of six thousand men, is undoubtedly the most honorable command, next to the Commander-in-chief; that my ceding it would, of course, have an odd appearance. I must entreat, therefore, after making a thousand apologies for the trouble my rash assent has occasioned you, that, if this detachment does march, I may have the command of it."

Before this letter was received, Lafayette had already marched towards the enemy, now but a few miles from the American camp. Washington complied with General Lee's request, and rein-

stated him in the command ; explaining the circumstances to Lafayette, who at once, with the cheerfulness with which he ever submitted to any personal sacrifice for the public service, acquiesced in the change.

General Lee took with him two additional brigades ; and the whole number of troops under his command, when he arrived at Englishtown, in the rear of the enemy, was about five thousand. At the distance of three miles, still further in the rear, was the main army, under Washington, ready to support the advanced division at the shortest notice.

During the night, General Washington learned that the British were encamped in open grounds near Monmouth Court House, four or five miles in advance of Lee ; and he resolved to attack them as soon as they should begin their march. Lee was ordered to make his dispositions accordingly, and to keep his men lying on their arms. At five o'clock the next morning, June 28th, intelligence was received that the enemy's front was in motion ; and Washington immediately despatched an aid-de-camp to Lee, directing him to move on and begin the attack, "unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary ;" informing him, at the same time, that the second division would come up to his support.

These orders were promptly executed by General Lee, and his division reached the ground, where the British had encamped the night before, soon after they had left it, the rear column being still in sight. On reconnoitring this column, he judged it to be a covering party, and to consist of fifteen hundred or two thousand men, occupying a plain about a mile in breadth, between Monmouth Court House and the heights on the left. He then ordered General Wayne to file off and attack them in the rear, not vigorously, but as a feint, with the design of keeping them on the ground, while Grayson's, Scott's, and Maxwell's brigades should march through a wood on the left, for the purpose of cutting off this party, and bringing it between two fires.

Much time was spent in making these arrangements, owing to the nature of the grounds, intersected in some parts by ravines, and in others covered with wood. There was very little firing on either side, except a slight skirmish with Colonel Butler's regiment, and a cannonade kept up, for some time, from a few pieces of artillery under Colonel Oswald.

Meantime, Sir Henry Clinton, learning the situation of his rear, brought back a reënforcement. This was done without the knowledge of Lee, as it was not within the range of his observation. He only perceived, upon reconnoitring, that the

enemy's force was larger than he had at first supposed. His plan for cutting off the rear, however, was thus defeated. He resolved, nevertheless, to hazard an engagement on that ground, which was the last he would have chosen, having a morass in his rear that would contract his movements, and embarrass his retreat, in case he should be pushed by the enemy.

Whilst he was making the proper dispositions for this object in front and on the right, Scott moved from the wood on the left towards the plain without orders, and, deceived by a column which he saw marching in an oblique direction towards the Court House across the plain, and which he thought was retreating, he likewise began to retreat. When this was made known to General Lee, he expressed great surprise and disapprobation; but Scott had passed a ravine, and it was too late to correct the error without exposing his army to imminent hazard, as the enemy were near at hand. A retreat had thus begun without the knowledge, and against the intention, of General Lee. In the present conjuncture, however, he deemed it necessary to order a general retreat, and to form his troops on more advantageous ground in the rear. When he had marched back about two and a half miles, continually pressed by the enemy, with occasional skirmishes, and whilst his front

columns were just beginning to gain the high grounds where he intended to form them and oppose the enemy, he was met by General Washington. This was at about twelve o'clock.

Having heard the cannonade, and believing, from previous intelligence, that Lee had engaged the enemy, Washington had put the second division in motion, and was marching to his support. Lee had strangely neglected to send him any notice of the retreat, although it had occupied nearly two hours; nor was it known to Washington, till he met some of the stragglers in advance of the retreating troops. His astonishment may well be imagined. In a state of excited feeling, which the occasion could not fail to produce, he rode rapidly to the rear of the retreating columns, where he found General Lee. The interview is described by Lee himself in his defence before the court-martial.

"When I arrived first in his presence, conscious of having done nothing which could draw on me the least censure, but rather flattering myself with his congratulation and applause, I confess I was disconcerted, astonished, and confounded by the words and manner in which his Excellency accosted me. It was so novel and unexpected from a man, whose discretion, humanity, and decorum I had from the first of our acquaintance stood in admiration of, that I was for

some time unable to make any coherent answer to questions so abrupt, and in a great measure to me unintelligible. The terms, I think, were these. ‘I desire to know, Sir, what is the reason, whence arises this disorder and confusion?’ The manner in which he expressed them was much stronger and more severe than the expressions themselves. When I recovered myself sufficiently, I answered that I saw or knew of no confusion but what naturally arose from disobedience of orders, contradictory intelligence, and the impertinence and presumption of individuals, who were invested with no authority, intruding themselves in matters above them and out of their sphere; that the retreat in the first instance was contrary to my intentions, contrary to my orders, and contrary to my wishes.”

Washington replied, that all this might be true, but he ought not to have undertaken the enterprise, unless he intended to go through with it. He then rode away, and ordered some of the retreating regiments to be formed on the ground which he pointed out. In a short time he again returned, and asked Lee if he would take the command in that place. Lee assented, saying that the command had before been given to him. “I expect, then,” said Washington, “that measures will immediately be taken to check the enemy;” to which Lee made

answer, that "his orders should be obeyed, and he would be the last to leave the field." Washington rode back to the rear division, and prepared to bring it into action.

Lee executed the orders he had just received with promptness and energy. The troops were formed in the face of the enemy; a sharp conflict ensued, which he sustained with firmness, and finally brought off his troops in good order, while the main army was forming in the rear. When General Washington came up to him a second time, Lee said, "Here, Sir, are my troops; how is it your pleasure that I should dispose of them?" He was directed to arrange them at Englishtown. This was three miles from the scene of action. On Lee's arrival, he found General Steuben engaged in the duty assigned to him, and of course his presence was not necessary. He went back to the field, and offered his services to the Commander-in-chief wherever they might be required. How he was employed is uncertain, for no more is heard of him during the day.

A general action immediately followed, which was kept up without intermission till darkness separated the combatants. The American troops lay on their arms through the night, expecting to renew the engagement in the morning. They were disappointed in this expectation. The

British, having no other object than a quick and safe passage to Sandy Hook, whence they would be conveyed to New York by water, marched away silently in the night, and joined their front division, which had charge of the long train of baggage brought from Philadelphia.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Correspondence between Lee and Washington.—Lee's Arrest.—Charges.—Trial by a Court-Martial.—Remarks on the Testimony, and on the Decision of the Court.*

THE affair at Monmouth caused the ruin of General Lee. Whatever may be thought of his motives or his conduct in the part he acted, his precipitancy and rashness afterwards brought him into difficulties, which thickened as he advanced, and from which it was never in his power to extricate himself. It was natural that he should be wounded and mortified by the events of the day; but he fell upon the most indiscreet method imaginable for obtaining redress, even admitting his grievances to have been as great as he would make them. Instead of a calm appeal to the

public, by requesting, in respectful terms, a court of inquiry, he wrote vehement letters to the Commander-in-chief, breathing a spirit, and manifesting a temper, which none could approve, and many would condemn. He thereby lost, at the outset, the advantage gained by dignity and self-command in supporting even a just cause, and laid himself open on every side to suspicion, prejudice, and censure. Two days after the battle, while the army was at Englishtown, he wrote as follows to Washington.

"From the knowledge I have of your Excellency's character, I must conclude that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of so very singular expressions as you did on my coming up to the ground where you had taken post. They implied that I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, want of conduct, or want of courage. Your Excellency will therefore infinitely oblige me, by letting me know on which of these articles you ground your charge, that I may prepare for my justification, which I have the happiness to be confident I can do to the army, to the Congress, to America, and to the world in general. Your Excellency must give me leave to observe, that neither yourself, nor those about your person, could, from your situation, be in the

least judges of the merits or demerits of our manœuvres; and, to speak with a becoming pride, I can assert that to these manœuvres the success of the day was entirely owing. I can boldly say, that, had we remained on the first ground, or had we advanced, or had the retreat been conducted in a manner different from what it was, this whole army, and the interests of America, would have risked being sacrificed.

"I ever had, and hope I ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington. I think him endowed with many great and good qualities; but in this instance I must pronounce, that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice towards a man, who certainly has some pretensions to the regard of every servant of this country. And I think, Sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed; and, unless I can obtain it, I must in justice to myself, when this campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from a service at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries. But at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat that I from my soul believe, that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs, who will forever insinuate themselves near persons in high office; for I really am convinced, that when General Washington acts from

himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice or indecorum."

Washington replied, "I have received your letter, expressed, as I conceive, in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of having made use of any very singular expressions at the time of meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said was dictated by duty, and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will permit, you shall have an opportunity of justifying yourself to the army, to Congress, to America, and to the world in general, or of convincing them that you were guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehavior before the enemy, on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat."

To this brief answer, General Lee returned another still more brief. "You cannot afford me greater pleasure, Sir, than in giving me an opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that the temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to effusecate the bright rays of truth. In the mean time, your Excellency can have no objection to my retiring from the army."

He was put under arrest the same day, and a copy of the charges was presented to him.

He had requested that he might be brought to trial before a court-martial without delay. The charges were, "First, Disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeably to repeated instructions; Secondly, Misbehavior before the enemy on the same day, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat; Thirdly, Disrespect to the Commander-in-chief, in two letters." A court-martial was convened on the 4th of July, consisting of five general officers and eight colonels. Lord Stirling was the president. The proceedings of the court were retarded by the march of the army, and they were not closed till the 12th of August.

Nearly all the officers of rank, who acted under General Lee, were examined. The testimony is voluminous, and encumbered with a body of details, which, when taken in the mass, convey but a confused idea of the manœuvres of the day to one who looks at them only through this medium. The subject was evidently sifted to the bottom. General Lee's defence before the court, and his remarks on the evidence, are ingenious and able, but more tinctured with bold and pungent expressions, which abound in his other compositions, than was perhaps expedient on such an occasion. The court found him guilty upon all the charges; modifying the

second, however, by leaving out the word "shameful," and deciding the retreat to have been "in some instances" disorderly. He was sentenced to be suspended from any command in the army for twelve months.\*

For the result of the trial, and this heavy sentence, General Lee appears to have been wholly unprepared. Either from a conviction of his innocence, a too sanguine temperament, confidence in the weight of his character, or all these combined, he had cherished the belief that he should at least be cleared from the first two charges. And, indeed, whoever will now examine the testimony, and rely alone on the facts there stated for the grounds of his judgment,

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\* Congress ordered one hundred copies of the proceedings of the court-martial to be printed for the use of the members. In the year 1823, Mr. Jacob Morris, a friend of General Lee, who was a volunteer in a troop of dragoons at the battle of Monmouth, caused an edition to be published at Cooperstown, in the state of New York. In his notice to the public, prefixed to the volume, Mr. Morris says, "To do justice to the memory of a gallant, frank, and warm-hearted soldier of the revolution, who, although not a native born American, was surpassed by few of that eventful period in zeal and devotion to the cause of this country, I have directed to be republished the proceedings of the court-martial, that decided on the conduct of General Lee at the battle of Monmouth." In his opinion, the proceedings will prove, to a dispassionate reader of the present day, that General Lee "was harshly dealt by."

will not easily discover the proofs by which the charges were sustained in the minds of the officers who constituted the court.

In the first place, the orders for attacking the enemy were discretionary. He was not required to attack at all hazards, but only in case there should not be powerful reasons to the contrary, and of these reasons he must of course be the judge; although he could not doubt that an attack was the principle upon which General Washington intended him to act. Lee insisted that an officer could not strictly be chargeable with disobedience of a discretionary order.

Again, there was positive proof that he did attack the enemy, and that his first manœuvres were designed to cut off their rear-guard. And even after this part of the enemy's force was ascertained to be much larger than was at first supposed, he was still pursuing the same design, when the detachments on his left began to retreat without his orders, till they had arrived in such a position as would render it hazardous to reverse their movement in the face of the enemy, and bring them into action on the ground then occupied. In this state of things he ordered, or rather allowed, a general retreat, for it does not appear by the testimony that any officer at that time received from General Lee a positive order to retreat. He declared it to

have been his intention to form the retreating troops on the first suitable ground, and meet the enemy there; but no such ground came in his way, till he met General Washington.

The testimony contains nothing at variance with this declaration. He maintained, moreover, that the retreat was a fortunate accident, because the main army was then five or six miles in his rear, and could not have come up in season to afford him the requisite support while engaged with the superior force of the British on disadvantageous ground, especially as the enemy's cavalry was numerous, and could act with facility on both his wings. He claimed merit, therefore, for having brought off his troops without loss to a position in which they were enabled to join in the general action of the day.

As to the retreat being disorderly, the case was not made out very clearly before the court. Some of the witnesses said they saw regiments in disorder, but no officer declared his own troops to have been in that condition. Others said the troops seen by them were marching in good order. The truth seems to have been, that the extreme heat of the weather, the consequent fatigue of the men, and the nature of the ground, caused some of the troops to move in a scattered manner; whilst others, under more favor-

able circumstances, marched regularly and in a compact form. Not a single regiment was cut off or essentially molested by the enemy ; they were all formed without difficulty at the end of their march ; and these facts would not seem to indicate so great a disorder as to render the commander culpable.

General Lee was guilty of one fault, however, which admitted of no defence or palliation ; the neglect to send to the Commander-in-chief intelligence of the retrograde movement of the troops. With the enemy pressing closely upon his rear, he was marching directly into the front of the other division without giving the least notice of his approach. This negligence might have produced fatal consequences to both divisions of the army. On this point General Lee's explanation is lame and inconclusive. The degree of censure it deserved must depend on his motives, which cannot be known ; but the act itself was undoubtedly censurable.

It is evident, from the testimony, that a strong prejudice against General Lee existed among the officers, and probably in the great body of the army, whilst the trial was in progress. This was owing mainly to his own imprudence. His conversation after he left the field was extremely indiscreet ; reports of this conversation went abroad, and were even allowed to be produced

in evidence before the court. He talked freely and openly of the inferiority of the American troops in discipline and cavalry to those under Sir Henry Clinton, of his opposition to a general attack from the beginning, and of the rashness and inexpediency of such a measure when the independence of America was secured by the recent alliance with France. He also censured General Washington for ordering an attack after the decision of a council of war against it. These ideas were so little accordant with the known spirit and military ardor of General Lee, with his eagerness on all occasions for distinction in arms, that his sincerity seemed questionable to many, and secret motives of a personal nature were surmised to lie at the bottom.

His state of mind, and manner of speech, may be understood by an extract from a letter to Joseph Reed, President of Pennsylvania, dated July 22d, while the trial was pending.

"You tell me I have much sunk in the public esteem and confidence. All I can say in reply is, if a community, for whom I have sacrificed everything, can so easily form conclusions, they, and not I, are the immediate objects of compassion. You tell me this is a time I have occasion for friends. As a man of society, I wish, and ever did wish, for a number of friends, the

greater the number the more the honor and pleasure; but if you mean friends to support my cause on the present occasion, I despise the thought; I ask only for common justice. I am conscious that nothing but cabal, artifices, powers, and iniquity, can tarnish my name for a moment; but, if they are to prevail on the community, as to myself, *impavidum ferient ruinæ*. No attack, it seems, can be made on General Washington, but it must recoil on the assailant. I never entertained the most distant wish or intention of attacking General Washington; I have ever honored and respected him as a man and a citizen; but, if the circle which surrounds him chooses to erect him into an infallible divinity, I shall certainly prove a heretic; and if, great as he is, he can attempt wounding everything I ought to hold dear, he must thank his priests if his deityship gets scratched in the scuffle.

“ When you say I have now put it out of the power of my friends, in and out of Congress, to offer a word in my defence, upon my honor I know not what you mean. I repeat, I demand nothing from the public but justice. I have been grossly, villainously dealt with, and the dread of no power on earth shall prevent me from exposing the wickedness of my persecutors. I wish not to attack; but must, it is my duty to defend. If this is thought dangerous, I must

observe that the blood and treasure expended in this war have been expended in vain; as North and Mansfield, if they had succeeded, could not possibly have established a more odious despotism."

From the impatience of his temper, and his high spirit, we may presume he did not refrain from expressing sentiments of a similar import in camp and to his other correspondents; and these sentiments were certainly not of a kind to conciliate public favor, or the good will of those around him. The disrespectful and even insulting language, which he had allowed himself to use in his two letters to Washington, could not be overlooked nor easily forgiven. Such was the hold which Washington had gained on the affections of the army and of the whole people, after a long experience of his ability and public virtue, and such was believed to be the importance to the country of maintaining him in the high position in which his character and the voice of the nation had placed him, that so bold an assault was accounted little less than treason to the American cause. These impressions and facts, connected with Lee's disregard of orders before his capture, which was now remembered against him, helped to foster the apprehension of a sinister design, on his part, to effect the ruin of Washington, with the ambitious hope of be-

coming his successor. Without impeaching the fidelity or candor of the members of the court, therefore, it may reasonably be supposed that the influences on their minds, derived from these considerations, may have thrown a stronger coloring upon the testimony against General Lee, in regard to the first two charges, than would be seen by one who now looks simply at the facts of the case recorded in the testimony itself.\*

The question may be asked, why Washington should prefer such charges, if there were not the clearest positive proofs for sustaining them. This question has been answered by Chief Justice Marshall. "Previous to the arrest, and to the answer given to the first letter received from General Lee, accusations against his conduct had

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\* General Lee maintained, that the two letters ought never to have been submitted to the consideration of the court-martial. "Most certainly," he says, "they do not come under the article of war, the intention of which is to restrain officers and soldiers from writing or speaking disrespectfully of the Commander-in-chief. These letters were private letters of remonstrance and expostulation, betwixt officer and officer, for injuries conceived to have been offered, and ought to have been considered as such only." No other person, probably, would entertain this opinion. The letters related to public transactions, and must have been intended by the writer to produce an impression on the public.

been made by several officers of his detachment, and particularly by Generals Wayne and Scott, in which the transactions of the day, not being well understood, were represented in colors much more unfavorable to Lee than those which, on a full investigation, they afterwards wore. These representations, most probably, produced the strength of the expressions contained in the second article 'of the charge.'\* It should be remembered, also, that neither Wayne nor any other officer, at the time the charges were issued, was acquainted with all the plans and movements of the Commander, nor with the important circumstance of the rear division of the enemy being much enlarged by a detachment from the main army, during General Lee's manœuvres before the retreat.

But, in whatever light we may now view the subject, it is certain the decision of the court met with entire approbation from the army and the public generally. The tide of popular favor, which had run so high in the first year of the war, and which, indeed, had continued without much diminution till the battle of Monmouth, was now effectually turned. And in producing this change, General Lee's indiscretions had been chiefly instrumental; they inflamed the public

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\* Marshall's *Life of Washington*, Vol. III. p. 481

mind, and rendered his trial necessary. There is no reason for supposing that General Washington intended to take any official notice of his conduct on the field of Monmouth, if he had not been driven to it by the rash and imperious tone of the unfortunate letters. The events of that day would have been left to tell their own story, and to make such impressions on the minds of men as their merits or demerits deserved.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*Decision of the Court-Martial laid before Congress.—Confirmed, after much Delay.—Lee retires to his Estate in Virginia.—His Manner of Life.—Writes Political and Military Queries.—Washington's Remarks on them.—Lee resigns his Commission in the Army, which is accepted by Congress.*

THE proceedings of the court-martial were not final; they were to be approved or set aside by Congress. Leaving the army, General Lee repaired to Philadelphia, intending there to await the issue, apparently confident that the decision would be reversed. While on his way, he wrote

to his friend, Dr. Rush, in language sufficiently expressive of his opinion of the court.

"I find that you are not thoroughly persuaded of the propriety of my conduct on the 28th of June. Your letter implies that I did blunder. Now, if I did, I am incorrigible; for I declare solemnly, if the transactions of that day were to be done over again, I should do just the same. I aver, that my conduct was in every respect irreproachable; that it will stand the strictest scrutiny of every judge. I aver, that my court-martial was a court of inquisition; that there was not a single member with a military idea, at least if I may pronounce from the different questions they put to the evidences. And I may with all charity pronounce, that, if they could have proved that I had only, in the course of the day, uttered the word *retreat*, they would have sentenced me to an ignominious death, or at least cashiered me with infamy. But this retreat, though necessary, was fortunately brought about contrary to my orders, contrary to my intention; and, if anything can deduct from my credit, it is that I did not order a retreat which was so necessary."

Such effusions of imbibited feeling, uttered, as they probably were, in the ear of every willing listener, while the matter was still in suspense,

were not likely to increase the number of his friends, or gain advocates for his cause. In the present condition of his affairs, a dignified reserve, in regard to himself and his opponents, and a calm explanation and defence of his conduct, would have opened a more direct channel to the sympathy of the public; or, if he was too proud to seek for sympathy, such a course would more readily have unbarred to him the gates of justice, the end at which he professed to aim. There are times when the stoutest and bravest heart must yield to the necessity of circumstances, and take a lesson from the humble virtues of prudence and submission. Such was now the situation of General Lee. He could not control his destiny, and he was unequal to the task of so far controlling himself as to submit to it. His haughty spirit, irritable temper, and resolute self-confidence, bore him away on the tide of his ill fortune, till he was plunged into embarrassments from which he could not escape.

He betrayed much impatience, and apparently not without reason, at the delay of Congress in coming to a final decision on the proceedings of the court-martial. The subject was kept in suspense by that body more than three months. During this delay, General Lee wrote a respect-

ful letter to the President, representing the delicacy of his situation, and urging speedy action. "An additional motive for requesting it," he says, "is, that I find the Congress is every day growing thinner; and I confess I could most ardently wish that the Congress was not only as complete as possible, but that, if it were agreeable to the rules of the house, the people at large might be admitted to form an audience, when the discussion is entered into of the justice or iniquity, wisdom or absurdity, of the sentence that has been passed upon me." The affair was brought under discussion at nine different times. As the Old Congress always sat with closed doors, neither the substance nor tenor of the debates was known abroad. At length, on the 5th of December, the sentence of the court-martial was confirmed by a majority of the members then present. It was, indeed, a thin house, consisting of only twenty-one members, of whom twenty voted, thirteen in the affirmative, and seven in the negative. Several members had left Congress while the subject was under consideration.\*

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\* After the proceedings of the court-martial had been laid before Congress, General Lee forwarded the testimony of Major Clarke, which, by some oversight, had not been rendered to the court. The testimony, probably as being out of order, was not admitted by Congress. Major Clarke

The debates were understood to have been warm as well as protracted. The spirit engendered the year before, by *Conway's Cabal*, with which the national counsels are known to have been more or less contaminated, was not as yet wholly laid to rest. It was the purpose of that restless and ambitious officer, and his associates, to drive Washington from the command of the army, either by worrying him into a resignation, or by raising

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came to General Lee, with orders from General Washington, just at the time the retreat began. The orders were, that "he should annoy the enemy as much as in his power, but at the same time should proceed with caution." Major Clarke understood the orders to be discretionary. General Lee told him to inform the Commander-in-chief, that, "by too much precipitancy in one of his brigadiers, and false intelligence, his troops were thrown into confusion, and he was retiring." Major Clarke affirms, that he delivered this message to Washington. There was no proof before the court of such a message having been delivered; and, in fact, General Lee did not allege, in his defence, that he had sent to Washington any notice of his retreat. In the hurry of the moment, it had probably escaped his recollection. It is certain that the message was not delivered to Washington in such a manner as to convey to him any intelligence of a retreat, and it is also certain that General Lee himself had no remembrance of such a message.

The members of Congress, who voted against confirming the sentence of the court-martial, were Whipple of New Hampshire, Samuel Adams and Lovell of Massachusetts, Carmichael of Maryland, Smith of Virginia, Harnett of North Carolina, and Langworthy of Georgia.

the popular cry against him to such a pitch, as to make his dismissal from the service necessary. This treacherous attempt signally failed, but not till it had worked much mischief, by inflaming the passions of men and the violence of party, both in the army and in Congress. The brilliant achievement of the American arms at Saratoga had thrown an accidental lustre around the name of Gates, and he was ostensibly put forward by the cabal as successor to the Commander-in-chief; but General Lee was believed to be the man really intended for that important station.

It must be remembered, however, that he was at this time a close prisoner in New York, and could not have been personally concerned in any of these schemes of faction and treachery. But he had the imprudence, while his case was before Congress, to write for the newspapers a defence of Conway, who had been discharged from the public service with disgrace; and although this performance was published without his name, yet it possessed so many of the characteristics of his style and manner of thinking and talking, that no one could mistake the authorship. These circumstances may have affected in some degree the debates in Congress, and the ultimate decision of that body.

Meantime, General Lee's warmth of temper and unguarded language involved him in other diffi-

culties. He could not conceal his resentments, nor refrain from giving utterance, on all occasions, to his secret thoughts and exasperated feelings. He spoke of Washington in terms of censure and abuse, which, even if warranted in his own opinion, could not fail to react upon himself and to the injury of his cause. Colonel Laurens, one of Washington's aids, distinguished for his chivalrous spirit and many high traits of character, took this license of speech in serious part, and demanded the satisfaction to which he said he was entitled by the near relation in which he stood to the Commander-in-chief. General Lee promptly accepted the challenge; a duel was fought with pistols, and he was wounded in the side.

Soon afterwards, with more reason for his support, he became embroiled in another quarrel. William Henry Drayton, Chief Justice of South Carolina, in a charge to the grand jury, the year before, took occasion to go out of his way, very unnecessarily as it would seem, to censure General Lee's conduct in his march through New Jersey, accusing him of disobedience of orders. It certainly does not appear what a grand jury in South Carolina had to do with this question, nor upon what pretext a public functionary in a civil line should bring such an accusation, till

the case had been examined by a military tribunal.

General Lee naturally felt himself injured, and called on Mr. Drayton, then a member of Congress, for an explanation. The latter answered, that he had spoken only what he believed to be true, and if General Lee would convince him to the contrary, he would retract the charge. This answer was not such as to satisfy the claims of wounded honor, or to calm a fiery spirit, especially as Mr. Drayton had been one of his most active and determined adversaries in Congress ; and Lee wrote him another letter, copiously seasoned with pointed and pungent expressions, which he knew so well how to use. Of this letter Mr. Drayton took no notice ; indeed, his friends say he sent it back unopened. Despairing of any other remedy, Lee, in military phrase, demanded satisfaction. Mr. Drayton declined the challenge, on the ground, that duelling did not comport with his situation as a judge and member of Congress, and that he was not bound to " sacrifice his public reputation, and outrage his public character, merely to gratify General Lee in the line of his profession." Most persons will approve this decision ; but few will think he acted a just or strictly honorable part, when, in his official capacity, he voluntarily uttered a public

censure upon a man, for a grave delinquency in a high trust, who had not been called to account by his superiors, who was in no possible degree amenable to the grand jury of South Carolina for what he had done, and who was then a close prisoner with the enemy, unable to defend or explain his conduct.\*

Lee remained in Philadelphia two or three months after his case was decided by Congress, and then retired to his estate in Berkeley county, Virginia, which he called *Prato Rio*. Here he lived more like a hermit than a citizen of the world, or the member of a civilized community. His house was little more than a shell, without partitions, and containing scarcely the necessary articles of furniture for the most common uses. To a gentleman, who visited him in this forlorn retreat, where he found a kitchen in one corner, a bed in another, books in a third, saddles and harness in a fourth, Lee said, "Sir, it is the most convenient and economical establishment in the world. The lines of chalk, which you see on the floor, mark the divisions of the apartments, and I can sit in any corner, and give orders, and overlook the whole, without moving from my chair."

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\* John Drayton's *Memoirs of the Revolution*, Vol. I. p. xxiii.

One of his foibles was a passionate fondness for horses and dogs ; and even during his visits, travels, and campaigns, his faithful dogs were his constant companions, sometimes to the discomfort of his host, and to the terror of ladies who prided themselves upon the neatness of their carpets and rugs. To a friend, who rallied him on this point, he wrote from camp, in his most prosperous days, “I am called whimsical, and a lover of dogs. As to the former charge, I am heartily glad it is my character ; for, until the common routine of mankind is mended, I shall wish to remain and be thought eccentric ; and, when my honest quadruped friends are equalled by the bipeds in fidelity, gratitude, or good sense, I will promise to become as warm a philanthropist as Mr. Addison himself affected to be. It certainly appears paradoxical, but, if you will examine history, you will find all, or almost all, the enthusiasts for general liberty had the reputation of being cynically disposed.” It is but fair to say, however, that in this description he hardly does himself justice. He had great colloquial powers, and there are abundant proofs of his having been a most agreeable companion to those whose society he sought. Eccentric he always was, more from nature than study, and for the most part in a way rather to amuse than offend his associates. In the solitude he had now

chosen for himself, however, he unquestionably secured the advantage of following the bent of his humor without restraint, and of enjoying to his heart's content the company of his dogs, his cynical disposition, and his whimsical eccentricities.

But these resources for the employment of his thoughts did not prevent him from brooding over his misfortunes, and cherishing in his bosom the bitter recollection of his real or imagined wrongs. He made little effort, apparently, to stifle his resentments, and less to submit with patience to his wayward fate. Three months after his retirement, he wrote *Queries, Political and Military*, which begin with certain abstract propositions on the nature of civil liberty, but chiefly consist of hints and questions on some of the events of the war; the drift of the whole being to cast a slur upon the character and military conduct of Washington.

These *Queries* were designed for publication in Philadelphia, but no printer was courageous enough to admit them into his paper. At length they found a place in the *Maryland Journal*, published at Baltimore. The citizens were thrown into a ferment by what they deemed an audacious and unjust attack upon a man revered for his many virtues, elevated by his public station, and with whose good name the highest

interests of the country were interwoven. To shield himself from the effects of popular indignation, the printer acknowledged his error, and gave up the name of the author. Setting aside the temper and design of this performance, it was extremely ill-timed and impolitic in regard to the writer himself; he could gain nothing, but might lose much, by adding fuel to the flame he had already kindled, and putting new weapons into the hands of his enemies. He did not reflect, that, although his spirit had not been broken by his hard fortune, yet his position in the eye of the public was changed; and that, to a man in his situation, defiance and hardihood were the last methods by which he could hope to win back the favor he had lost, or to establish his cause on the broad basis of right and justice.\*

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\* After Washington had read the *Queries*, he wrote to a friend, "The motives, which actuate this gentleman, can better be accounted for by himself than by me. If he can produce a single instance in which I have mentioned his name, after his trial commenced, where it was in my power to avoid it, and, when it was not, where I have done it with the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect, I will consent that the world shall view my character in as disreputable a light as he wishes to place it. What cause there is, then, for such a profusion of venom, as he is emitting upon all occasions, unless by an act of public duty, in bringing him to trial at his own solicitation, I have disappointed him and raised his ire; or he conceives that, in proportion as he

Of the monotonous life led by General Lee in his seclusion, few incidents are known. During the first year, he seldom left his estate. For some time he talked of going to Europe, and abandoning forever a country from which he had received only ingratitude and unjust reproach, in return for his many sacrifices and devoted service. This resolution, if ever seriously formed, was gradually relinquished. One bright spot in this year's history is worthy of notice. He wrote a complimentary letter to General Wayne, on the victory gained by the latter at Stony Point. A friendly correspondence ensued. Wayne had been his most forward and decided opponent in the affair of Monmouth. Lee's readiness to

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can darken the shades of my character, he illuminates his own; whether these, I say, or motives still more hidden and dark, govern him, I shall not undertake to decide." Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. VI. p. 311.

On another occasion, commenting likewise on a publication of a similar stamp by General Lee, he said, "If he conceives that I was opposed to him, because he found himself disposed to enter into a party against me; if he thought I stood in his road to preferment, and that it was therefore convenient to lessen me in the esteem of my countrymen, in order to pave the way for his own advancement, I have only to observe, that, as I never entertained any jealousy of him, so neither did I ever do more than common civility and proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion. His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration." *Ibid.* p. 133.

applaud his merit on a subsequent occasion, and to preserve a continuance of his friendship, is a proof that he was not implacable, nor always led away by passion.

Another incident, however, wears a different complexion. The term of his suspension from the service had expired, and it is not probable that he intended again to join the army. A rumor came to his ear, intimating a design of Congress to deprive him of his commission. In the heat of the moment, with characteristic precipitancy, he indited the following brief epistle, without date, and despatched it to the President of Congress.

“Berkeley County.

“SIR,

“I understand that it is in contemplation of Congress, on the principle of economy, to strike me out of their service. Congress must know very little of me, if they suppose that I would accept of their money, since the confirmation of the wicked and infamous sentence which was passed upon me.

“I am, Sir, &c.

“CHARLES LEE.”

One measure only could, of course, be adopted on the receipt of this letter, which was a resolution, “That Major-General Charles Lee

be informed that Congress have no further occasion for his services in the army of the United States." This intelligence could not surprise General Lee, after his communication to the President. His answer demands notice, as being written in a more considerate tone, and exhibiting his character in a more amiable light, than had of late appeared either in his compositions or conduct.

"Berkeley County, January 30th, 1780.

"SIR,

"I have this day received your letter, with my dismission from the service of the United States; nor can I complain of it as an act of injustice. The greatest respect is indispensably due to every public body of men, and, above all, to those who are the representatives, and at the same time the legislature, of a free people; and I ingenuously confess that the note which I dictated was so far from being dressed in terms properly respectful, that they were highly improper, disrespectful, and even contumacious. But, although I do not mean to justify the measure, I flatter myself that I shall be able to extenuate the offensiveness by relating the circumstances which gave birth to it.

"I unfortunately received letters from two friends, whose zeal for my service seems to have been greater than their intelligence was authen-

tic, informing me that the same men who, by art and management, had brought about, in a thin house, the confirmation of the absurd and iniquitous sentence of the court-martial, were determined to pursue the matter still further, and, on the pretence of economy, to make a motion for the final removal of me from the army, as an encumbrance. It happened, at the very moment these letters came to my hands, I was very much indisposed; so much so, as not to be able to write myself;\* and, at the same time, my horses were at the door, to carry me down the country, where business called me. The bodily pain I was in, joined to the misinformation I received, ruffled my temper beyond all bounds; and the necessity of setting out immediately prevented me from giving myself time to consider the propriety or impropriety of what I was about. And thus these two circumstances, concurring, gave birth to the note which I dictated, which no man can more sincerely reprobate than I do myself, and for which I most sincerely beg pardon of Congress.

“But, Sir, I must entreat that, in the acknowledging of the impropriety and indecorum of my conduct in this affair, it may not be supposed

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\* He was likewise disabled from writing by a wound in his hand.

that I mean to court a restoration to the rank I held; so far from it, that I do assure you, had not the incident fallen out, I should have requested Congress to accept my resignation, as, for obvious reasons, whilst the army is continued in its present circumstances, I could not serve with safety and dignity. My present acknowledgment, therefore, of the impropriety and indecorum of the measure I suffered myself to be hurried into, and my submission without a complaint to the subsequent decision of Congress, will, I hope, be attributed to the real motive, the conviction of having done wrong.

"I shall now, Sir, conclude, with sincerely wishing that Congress may find many servants ready to make as great sacrifices as I have made, and possessed with the same degree of zeal for their service as has from the beginning governed all my actions, but with the good fortune never, by one act of imprudence, to incur their displeasure; and I can, without arrogance, assert, on self-examination, that this is the only step in the whole line of my conduct which could justly furnish matter of offence to that honorable body.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"CHARLES LEE."

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Continues to reside at his Estate.—Engages in political Discussions.—Freedom of the Press.—Visits Baltimore and Philadelphia.—His Death.—Remarks on his Character, and on some of the Incidents of his Life.*

HAVING thus thrown off all connection with the army, he became more tranquil in mind, and entered with a considerable degree of interest into the discussion of public affairs and passing events, particularly such as occurred in Virginia. He had leisure to indulge his fondness for books. In one of his letters, he says he had just finished reading the whole of Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses." At home, he continued to live in the same discomfort and seclusion as before; but he made occasional visits to his friends, in different parts of the state, with whom his former attachments, and his powers of interesting and instructive conversation, rendered him a welcome guest.\*

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\* Among these friends were the family connections of Mr. Monroe, afterwards President of the United States, then a young man in his minority. He was forming schemes of travel, and he wrote to General Lee, asking his advice on that subject and some others. The reply is cu-

If we may judge from a hint in a letter written to him by Mr. Ralph Wormeley, junior, of Rosegill, dated March 2d, 1780, he at one time thought of embarking in the career of politics. Alluding to some former transaction, Mr. Wormeley says,

"If I expressed my sentiments of General Lee's abilities and intentions, I could not express them in any terms less pregnant than I did; and I can faithfully assure you, that, had you represented Berkeley, I would have tried my interest in Middlesex. And, had I obtained a seat in the national assembly, I would have joined you hand and heart, by every effort of my abilities, every argument in my comprehension, to

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rious, as predicting the future success of his young friend, and touching a personal trait which always, in some degree, adhered to him. The following is an extract. "The letter I received from you by Mr. White gave me the greatest pleasure, as it assures me of your love and affection. What he reports of you gives me still more, as it not only assures me of the certainty you have of well establishing yourself in fame and fortune, but the good figure you make flatters my vanity, as I have always asserted that you would appear one of the first characters of this country, if your shyness did not prevent the display of the knowledge and talents you possess. Mr. White tells me you have got rid of this *mauvaise honte*, and only retain a certain degree of recommendatory modesty. I rejoice in it with all my soul, as I really love and esteem you most sincerely and affectionately."

bring about freedom of debate and the liberty of the press, without which the representative deliberations generate only faction and fetters, and noisy professions of patriotism become air. But necessity, state necessity, is the scythe that mows down every argument; and you are not to be taught by me, that, by the assistance of this argument, there is no degree of despotism which may not be vindicated and imposed."

The freedom of the press and of debate was a topic upon which General Lee often descended, with his usual earnestness. This freedom he maintained to be the vital element of civil and political liberty. The custom of Congress and the state legislatures to sit with closed doors, thus shielding the opinions and conduct of the members from the watchful oversight of their constituents, he looked upon as defrauding the people of some of their most valuable rights. As to the freedom of the press, he said it had "no more existence in this country than at Rome or Constantinople." Not that it was chained by the laws, but by the heavier trammels of a perverted public opinion. Coming recently from a theatre where such writers as JUNIUS, and others of his stamp, could with impunity assail the public character and conduct of the highest men in the nation, he could not conceive that a republic, boasting of its new-born

liberty, should consent to wear so degrading a badge of slavery as that of restraint upon the press. An unreserved discussion of the acts and opinions of public men was, in his view, the great bulwark of freedom, a barrier against the inroads of ambition, and an incentive to patriotism and the noblest virtues.

He raised his voice against some of the acts of the Virginia legislature. Among these were “the *tender law*, inverting the eternal rules of justice, corrupting the morals of the people, inciting and securing every kind of breach of faith and villany, and ruining the honest, the benevolent, and the generous ; and next, the *confiscation law*, which strips indiscriminately of their property Whigs and Tories, friends and foes, women and orphans, for no crime, or even the color of any crime, unless eventual, unavoidable absence, from the necessity of their affairs, can be constituted a crime.” He had good reason for denouncing the tender law, by which a depreciated currency could be forced on a creditor at its nominal value. He made a bargain for selling his estate, and received the first payment in sterling money. Before possession was given, he ascertained that the remainder, much the larger part of the whole, was to be paid in a depreciated paper currency, under the operation of the tender law. He succeeded in releas-

ing himself from the contract, and was enabled to refund the first payment by the timely aid of two of his friends, Robert Morris and William Goddard. This coincidence of personal interest with what he considered a vicious and inequitable legislation, was accidental. He was certainly as disinterested as any man ever could be in his steady and uncompromising defence of the rights and liberties of the people.

An experiment of two or three years in the business of a practical farmer convinced him, that he was neither a skilful nor thrifty agriculturist. His farm was unprofitable, his agents unfaithful, and he resolved to change his mode of life. The plans he may have formed for the future are not known. He had held preliminary negotiations with several individuals for the sale of his estate, but none of them had been brought to maturity, when, early in the autumn of 1782, he made a visit to his friends in Baltimore. He remained in that city a few days, and then continued his journey to Philadelphia. Here he had scarcely established himself in lodgings at an inn, when he was seized with an ague, followed by a fever, which baffled the skill of the physicians, and terminated his life on the 2d of October, at the age of fifty-one. In the delirium caused by the fever, the last words he was heard to say were, “Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!”

Notwithstanding his late aberrations, the citizens of Philadelphia, and men high in office, had not forgotten his early services and generous zeal in the cause of their country, and all seemed impressed with the feeling, that they demanded a grateful tear. Every mark of respect, which the occasion could require, was shown to his memory. He was buried with military honors. His remains were deposited in the cemetery of Christ Church, and were followed to the grave by a large concourse of citizens, the President of Congress and some of the members, the President and Council of Pennsylvania, the Minister Plenipotentiary of France, and several officers of distinction, belonging to both the American and French armies.

Thus ended the eventful career of General Charles Lee, a man who filled no ordinary space in the eye of the world, and whose misfortunes stand in melancholy contrast with his brilliant accomplishments, and the admiration, which, for a time, he drew from the willing and grateful hearts of a whole country. The preceding narrative will have failed of its aim, if it has not enabled the reader to form a judgment sufficiently exact of his character and his conduct; yet a few words more may not be misapplied or superfluous.

In the first place we may say, that he should

not be held accountable for the vehement passions and extremely excitable temper, which had been wrought by nature into the very constitution of his being. We may regret, and even condemn, his want of self-control; yet some indulgence is certainly due to the infirmities of such a mind. Few men have had the trial of so many conflicting elements in their nature, and for this reason few are competent to judge with perfect candor of the difficulties to be encountered in commanding and subduing them. At all events, it is neither reasonable nor just, that great qualities and high aspirations, steady in their action, should be darkened and thrown in the back ground by casual defects, transient in their operation, and seldom mischievous in their consequences.

There are innumerable proofs of the constancy of his friendships; and, if he was sometimes capricious, the evidence now left to us will not warrant the charge of insincerity as being a trait of his character. His hostility to Washington affords the most memorable instance of an unforgetting spirit. This root of bitterness he nourished in his bosom to the last; the hated idea haunted and tortured his imagination day and night; it was, with him, what he calls, on a different occasion, "the very madness of the moon;" and he suffered no opportunity to

escape, either in writing or speaking, without pouring out the flood of his resentment and reproaches. It would be idle to devise an apology for exhibitions of temper so wild and extravagant; but it should be remembered, that he looked upon the conduct of Washington towards him at Monmouth, however it might be interpreted by others, as the deep fountain of all his misfortunes. Wounded pride, disappointed hopes, a sinking reputation, blasted prospects, all the ills that brooded upon his soul, he referred to this source. In this conflict of heated passion and excited sensibility, he lost sight of his own indiscretions, and sought solace by pampering his imagination with vain dreams of persecution and wrongs, and in uttering maledictions against their author. But in this there was no disguise; he was the last man in the world to conceal his opinions, or mould them to suit the occasion; and it should be said to his credit, that he was totally incapable of attempting any design by underhand means, plot, cabal, or intrigue, so often the resort of little minds and reckless ambition.

With this prodigality of frankness on his part, it was impossible that Washington should not become well informed of his sentiments and his manner of divulging them. He allowed them to pass without notice. No letter written by him during the war has been found, touching the

transactions of General Lee, except those heretofore referred to, which were drawn from him by published remarks on his conduct, of which General Lee was the avowed author. And, after the war, when an inquiry was made of him concerning the publication of General Lee's papers, he replied, with a dignity and calmness suited to his character,

"In answer to your letter, I can only say, that your own good judgment must direct you in the publication of the manuscript papers of General Lee. I can have no request to make concerning the work. I never had a difference with that gentleman but on public ground, and my conduct towards him on this occasion was such only, as I felt myself indispensably bound to adopt in discharge of the public trust reposed in me. If this produced in him unfavorable sentiments of me, I yet can never consider the conduct I pursued, with respect to him, either wrong or improper, however I may regret that it may have been differently viewed by him, and that it excited his censure and animadversions. Should there appear in General Lee's writings anything injurious or unfriendly to me, the impartial and dispassionate world must decide how far I deserved it from the general tenor of my conduct."\*

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\* This letter was written, June 11th, 1785, to Mr. William Goddard, who had issued proposals for publishing the

In this extract every one will perceive the tone and spirit, the moderation, candor, and elevation of mind, which he would expect from the character of Washington as it is now known to the world. At another time, after General Lee's death, he said of him, that "he possessed many great qualities." And, in whatever light the affair of Monmouth shall be viewed, it may with confidence be affirmed, that Washington took no steps of a personal nature, either directly or indirectly, except such as were necessarily connected with that single event, which could in any degree tend to injure the character of General Lee while living, or tarnish his memory after his earthly career was closed.

Men of distinguished character, both in the civil and military line, possessing the confidence of their country, continued to be his friends to the last, notwithstanding the shade that had been cast upon him by his misfortunes. Among these he enumerated, in a private letter, a few months before his death, Robert Morris, Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, Generals Schuyler, Sullivan, Wayne, Greene, Knox, and several others. These were not men, who would cherish a friend-

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Writings of General Lee, in three volumes. The plan was never executed. The imperfect volume by Mr. Langworthy contains the only collection of the papers that has been published.

ship for one, whom they looked upon as culpably delinquent in the exercise of a public trust, or as treacherous to the cause in which he had so ardently engaged. There is another evidence of this friendship in a high quarter, which claims insertion. General Lincoln, then at the head of the Department of War, received a letter on some public business from a gentleman in Winchester, Virginia, to whom he wrote in reply, June 8th, 1782, "It affords me real pleasure to find, that I am regarded by the citizens of Winchester as General Lee's friend. Do me the justice to believe, that this opinion is perfectly corroborated by sentiments of esteem and affection, which I hope will always retain me such."

In his last will, he paid a tribute of affectionate remembrance to several of his intimate friends, and of grateful generosity to the humble dependants, who had adhered to him and ministered to his wants in his retirement. The bulk of his estate in Berkeley was given to four individuals, as a testimony of his gratitude for the obligations of kindness they had steadily conferred upon him through evil and good report. All his other property, in every part of the world, was bequeathed to his only sister, Sydney Lee, to whom he was ever devotedly attached.

Finally, in forming our general estimate of

his character, after allowing all the weight they deserve to his weaknesses and faults, his errors and eccentricities, we must still acknowledge with Washington, that "he possessed many great qualities." From the first to the last, in his principles, writings, and acts, he proved himself an uncompromising champion for the rights and liberties of mankind. He adopted the American cause under a firm conviction of its justice; he threw into it the fervid energies of his whole soul, with a sincerity and heartiness which cannot be questioned. By the example of his enthusiasm, by his military talents and resolute spirit, and by his successful enterprise in the early part of the war, he rendered important services to the country in the time of her greatest need. While we lament and condemn the faults which obscured his brighter qualities, let us not withhold from them the mantle of charity; let us not forget, that during his life the effects of them were severely visited upon him in his blighted hopes and defeated aims, nor refuse to his memory the award of gratitude and respect, which the prominent part he acted in the great struggle for American independence may rightfully claim.



L I F E  
OF  
J O S E P H R E E D  
BY  
HIS GRANDSON,  
HENRY REED.



## P R E F A C E .

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THIS memoir of Joseph Reed, of Pennsylvania, has been prepared chiefly from original documents, of which the greater part has not yet been published. His correspondence bearing upon public affairs began in the early period of colonial discontent, and was continued until after the close of the revolutionary war. His position and the nature of his services rendered it extensive and various, and it has been preserved in a state of remarkable completeness. It has an especial value in consequence of the voluminous correspondence which resulted from his intimacy with the two most eminent of his friends, Washington and Greene. The addition of his own letters to various correspondents, which have been recovered, renders the collection very complete.

Such materials may, it is believed, furnish an important contribution to American history, and also a just tribute to the character and services of a patriot of the revolution. This memoir, being from the pen of a near and lineal descendant, has been written with a constant sense of

the responsibility of preserving, in the fulfilment of a duty of filial piety, a strict and well sustained accuracy. Cherishing a natural and legitimate ancestral feeling, the writer has endeavored, at the same time, to maintain a reserve of eulogy, and to let the character and services of the subject of the memoir speak for themselves, in a simple narrative, and in the language of the contemporaries who witnessed and appreciated them.

It is in the discharge of both a public and a personal duty, that this tribute is rendered to the memory of one of the worthies of the revolution, who, after a career crowded with services in the cause of his country, and with proofs of public confidence in him, sank into a premature grave, the strength of his life

"————— overplied  
In liberty's defence."

## JOSEPH REED.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Birth and Parentage.—Education.—Study of the Law.—Influences of the Times.—Visit to England in 1763.—Student in the Middle Temple.—Public Affairs in England and America.—Dennis de Berdt.—Return to America in 1765.—Visit to Boston in 1769.—Second Visit to England in 1770.—Marriage.—Return to America.—Removal to Philadelphia.*

THIS memoir is of a life that belongs completely and exclusively to the revolutionary period of American story. The years of Mr. Reed's manhood were almost exactly contemporary with that space of time, which, in the interval between the peace of 1763 and the treaty of 1783, comprehended colonial discontent, resistance, and independence. During the whole contest of the revolution, from the early acts of pacific opposi-

tion and remonstrance until the last year of his life, he bore his share in the public measures, and his career was a series of civic and military services, blended, as they are apt to be, in lives connected with civil strife and revolutionary change.

A simple narrative of his life, his duties, and the fulfilment of them, may serve to show how characteristic and illustrative it was of our revolution; and, like other memoirs of its kind, it may teach us to know at what sacrifice of individual happiness, and in what spirit, a nation's existence is virtuously acquired. It will be seen how the quiet aims of life were frustrated, how professional aspirations were suddenly and strangely changed, and how, when the peaceful citizen became a soldier, and that in a civil war, early associations were broken, and all relations, political, social, and domestic, were rudely forced into new channels by the controlling current of public events. It will be seen how the troubled periods of a people's history, bringing along with them so much of danger, perplexity, and distress, bring at the same time into the heart of man the seasonable virtues of fortitude, of unwearyed and indomitable energy, of hopeful confidence in a good cause, and, above all, the spirit of self-sacrifice.

JOSEPH REED was born at Trenton, in the

province of New Jersey, on the 27th of August, 1742. His grandfather had migrated, in the latter part of the previous century, from the north of Ireland, and, after a short residence in New England, travelled southward, and settled in East Jersey. Mr. Reed's father, Andrew Reed, was engaged in trade in the town of Trenton, and was also, for some years, commercially connected in Philadelphia, which was his place of residence during a part of his son's boyhood. He enjoyed the esteem and confidence of his fellow-towns-men, by whom he was chosen to be the first treasurer of the borough of Trenton, when the village was incorporated in 1746. He was a member of the Presbyterian church, in which connection his family was trained. In business he thrived; and that he used the means, which industry and prosperity gave, like a sagacious and affectionate parent, is shown by the fact that he gave to his children the best education the country afforded. Indeed, to that son who is the subject of this memoir, and who gave sure and early promise of not only superior intellect, but also of the moral power to improve it, the best opportunities were given for professional education, in England as well as in the colonies.

Joseph Reed received his elementary classical instruction in the "Academy of Philadelphia," an incorporated school, for the establishment of

which the cause of provincial education was indebted chiefly to the sagacity and beneficence of Franklin. After receiving the thorough tuition of one of the old-fashioned pedagogues of the eighteenth century, Mr. Reed entered the New Jersey College at Princeton, under the presidency of Dr. Aaron Burr, and in 1757 the degree of bachelor of arts was conferred on him, when he was in his sixteenth year. A Latin oration, delivered by him on the occasion of his graduation, is preserved. As a college student he gained distinction, and appears to have laid a solid foundation for the studies of his profession, and for the various acquirements of liberal scholarship.

Mr. Reed's temporary residence at Princeton did not end with his connection with the college there, for it was at the same place that he was a student of law, under the direction of Richard Stockton, at that time probably the most distinguished lawyer in the courts of New Jersey. In 1763, just as he attained his majority, Mr. Reed was admitted to practice. The completion of his course of college studies at an early age had allowed ample scope for accurate legal education, with which he appears to have judiciously combined that general cultivation, especially in history and literature, which liberalizes professional habits of thought and feeling, and which had the

greater value for a man, for whom there was in reserve, little as he could then anticipate it, a sphere of action and of duty much larger than that of a mere provincial lawyer.

Beside the formal processes of education, there are other influences, which are often unnoticed because less definite and less measurable, but which are essential to a just knowledge of the formation of character; and in the careful study of American biography, it is important to trace the elements, which were combined to make the men of the revolutionary period of our history. Thus far, Mr. Reed's life had been the simple, undisturbed, and uneventful life of a student, looking forward to a tranquil professional career, and the condition of a British colonial subject. His knowledge of the world from other sources than books was probably limited to the society and the small circuit of New Jersey villages, and the neighboring city of Philadelphia. The peacefulness of that region of country had not, indeed, then been broken in upon, but elsewhere it was a stirring period in the history of the British empire, and, in truth, of the world; and it is no idle speculation, to inquire what there was in those times, which would naturally have an influence in forming the character of ingenuous and intelligent youth, with all its earnestness of feeling and all its irregular thoughtfulness. It is no irra-

tional effect of imagination, which pictures to the mind a group of young men gathered from the various colonies, in college chambers and halls, and catching intelligence, as it travelled in those days slowly from the frontiers, of French and Indian warfare. We may fancy the mingled pride and disappointment, with which they heard of the skirmish at the "Little Meadows," and of the defeated bravery of the Virginia officer, Major George Washington, with his small force ; and again, the deeper mortification and resentment, in their youthful breasts, at the news of Braddock's disaster, the massacre of his soldiers in a forest of Western Pennsylvania, and the headlong flight of the survivors.

We are here looking back, let it be remembered, to years when nothing had yet transpired to destroy, or even impair, the sentiment of loyalty to Great Britain in the mind of an American colonist, but when, rather, there was much to sustain and cherish the feeling. England was engaged in one of her mightiest wars. The origin of it was the defence of colonial boundaries in America, and the arena of hostilities was larger than the earth had ever given to war before. Metropolis and colony had the sympathy of a common cause, and provincial militia was serving side by side with Britain's veteran and disciplined soldiery. Now, with reference to the influence

of such times upon the formation of a young man's character, it needs must be that a thoughtful, well-informed mind, in the freshness of early manhood, would be affected by the living presence of the triumphant administration of the British empire by the first William Pitt.

To a young American, such as the subject of this memoir, there was much, too, to bring home to his thoughts the glories that were won in quick succession by the policy of that "Great Commoner." It was for this continent, as well as for Europe, that the minister conceived his vast scheme of operations. It was at Philadelphia that the forces commanded by Forbes were collected for the victorious march to Fort Duquesne, to effect a conquest planned by Pitt himself. The young colonist, who might have witnessed the departure of those troops, would scarce have heard the news of victory from the west, before there came from the north intelligence of Wolfe's brilliant campaign and heroic death; and each ship that touched our shores from other countries came freighted with the story of the successive achievements of the year 1759; a year which, by an admirable living historian,\* has been fitly pronounced "the most glorious, probably, that England ever yet had seen."<sup>†</sup>

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\* Lord Mahon.

† It was at that time that, with the characteristic viva

The heart of the British nation, throughout all its territory, whether "at home" (to use the phrase in those days given to England) or in the colonies, was raised from the torpor which seems to have weighed upon it since the inglorious peace of Utrecht; and it was Chatham's proud and just boast in the House of Commons, the loftiest a minister could utter, that success had given unanimity, and not unanimity success. It was a strenuous age, which well might invigorate the character of those who breathed in it. If, indeed, there was much to bind the spirit of a young colonist more closely to the empire by the sentiment of a common glory, and to impress him with a sense of its vast resources and power in war, there was also much that might give that strength of character to resist, in after years, the same national force, when employed for colonial subjugation.

From such general speculation on the formation of character, we may pass to some more definite influences, in which it is curious to trace the unconscious, and what may be considered providential, adaptation of the early to the later life, as we are reminded by viewing, in such connection, two periods of Mr. Reed's career. His

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city of his letters, Horace Walpole writes, "Indeed, one is forced to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one."

early years, it will be observed, were spent in Trenton, the place of his birth, in Philadelphia, and in Princeton; such residence as could hardly fail to give familiarity with the neighboring towns, and the contiguous portions of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

A few years pass by, and that self-same region becomes the scene of military operations, and in a very critical juncture of American affairs. Over that ground there was passing in flight an army, no longer colonial, but on whose reduced strength depended newly declared and doubtful independence; and when, almost in desperation, it rallied for sudden attack upon the pursuing enemy, there was not a movement that could be made with any hope of success, without the most precise and minute knowledge of localities. The whole plan of operations, when retreat was of a sudden changed to assault, might have been frustrated by information which was untrustworthy. Familiarity with fords, and by-roads, and distances, was needful in order to make successful the surprise at Trenton, the second passage of the Delaware, and the night march upon Princeton; and it was a happy circumstance, that, in the crisis of that campaign, Washington had near him one, and probably the only one among his military counsellors, who possessed such knowledge; one who, from early life, was intimately

acquainted with that section of country, which was the scene of hostilities at the end of 1776 and beginning of 1777.

When Joseph Reed, during boyhood at Trenton, and when, a little later, a student at Princeton, was rambling, as youth are wont to do, and musing, perhaps, upon the fresh intelligence that, in those stirring years, was so often carried from fields of battle lost or won in distant parts of British America or in Europe, how little could he have dreamed that, in no distant period, the tranquil soil he was treading on would feel the weight of armies, and the quiet roads and the banks of peaceful streams be violated by warfare; the academic halls of Princeton tenanted by hostile soldiery, and the neighboring orchards stained with the blood of British and American troops! How distant from Reed's young imagination must have been such visions of the future, and how little could it ever have entered into his thoughts, that, in those years in which his mind was intent upon the studious acquisition of knowledge, to fit him for peaceful civic life, he was also, but without a care, and almost without consciousness of it, becoming possessed of information which was afterwards to serve an important military use, when the welfare of his country was greatly in jeopardy!

After completing his course of law studies at

home, and having been admitted to practice in the courts of New Jersey, Mr. Reed immediately made arrangements for the further prosecution of his professional education. It was, at that time, not unusual for the young lawyers of this country, especially in the middle and southern colonies, to complete their course of studies by attendance in the Inns of Court in London; adding two years' reading in the Temple to the regular term of colonial instruction. In 1763, Mr. Reed sailed for England, and resided in London, as a student of the Middle Temple, till the spring of 1765. It is only necessary to notice these dates, to see how likely a residence in England, at that time, was to render the legal education of a young American also a political education. He was there to witness the beginning of those changes, which, at the end of the Seven Years' War, were coming over the colonial policy of Great Britain. His mind was acute with that study of the law, which Mr. Burke, in a well-known passage in his speech on conciliation with America, noticed as one of what he styled "six capital sources" of the untractable temper of the English colonies under oppression or encroachment; one of the elements of the vivid spirit of liberty among them.

Reed was at this time too young to take a prominent part with the friends of colonial rights,

whom he speaks of, in his letters, as exerting themselves in England with spirit and industry to moderate the designs of the ministry, and as, therefore, entitled to a share of American gratitude. The zeal of his naturally ardent temperament was heightened by the expectations of personal friends at home, who were anxiously looking for information, as to the action of the ministry and Parliament. He appears to have kept up a constant correspondence on the subject of public affairs, and early to have foreseen how the difficulties would be aggravated by the obstinate tenacity with which the policy towards the colonies, once determined on, was pursued. He quickly perceived, too, how the government was embarrassing itself, and injuring the colonies, by the almost wilful blindness with which it followed inaccurate and untrustworthy information.

As early as June, 1764, Mr. Reed writes home, on the subject of the restrictions on the colonial trade, "Petitions properly urged, last winter, while these affairs were under the consideration of the legislature, might have been attended with some degree of success, and possibly procured some abatement; but they will now come too late." Speaking of the proposed system of raising a revenue from the colonies, he adds, "Many things have occurred to precipitate this policy; and, among them, the exaggerated accounts the

officers from America have given of its opulence, and our manner of living, have had no small share in it, as there has, in this way, been raised a very high and false notion of our capacity to bear a part in the national expenses." It appears, from Reed's letters, that he was constant in his attendance upon the debates in Parliament, especially in the House of Commons, when American affairs were under discussion ; and, in one of his letters, he expresses the gratification of having heard Mr. Pitt.

While anxiously observing the course of political events in England, Mr. Reed's thoughts were turning with no less solicitude to the state of things at home, especially in the province of Pennsylvania. When intelligence reached him of occurrences, which he perceived would be made a pretext for injurious and oppressive colonial administration, he sends home words of warning, which have more the sound of mature than inexperienced manhood. Pennsylvania, at that time, had an Indian population on its frontiers, not more distant from Philadelphia than the country of the Susquehanna. Acts of violence, and treachery, and murder, became frequent ; and, at length, the people on the border were wrought to such exasperation, that a party of them, collected from the frontier counties, and called from one of the townships "the Paxton

Boys," surprised and put to death a body of Indians at Lancaster. They came down as near to Philadelphia as Germantown, tumultuously demanding that more ample provision should be made for the protection of the frontiers, and a stricter control asserted over the Indians.

Mr. Reed, being at London, looked at these provincial disturbances in the larger view of their ulterior relation to the general administration of the colonies, and, writing home, he warned his correspondents of the advantage which would probably be taken of such occurrences, at a time when it was especially desirable that the affairs of the several colonies should be conducted with discretion and regularity. "As the weakness of the civil authority was," he said, "a pretext made before to send over troops which we are to maintain, you may be sure the ministry will consider every such disorder as an additional argument to prove the necessity of such a measure, and, however injured the inhabitants of the frontiers may have been, their Germantown expedition may be the means of saddling their fellow subjects with an increased expense."

On Mr. Reed's first visit to England, he was introduced to the hospitality and friendly offices of Mr. Dennis De Berdt, an eminent London merchant, with extensive commercial connections in America, and subsequently agent for the

province of Massachusetts Bay.\* From this gentleman and his family the young colonial stranger had the kind reception with which gentlemen from America were always welcomed. An acquaintance apparently transient, as between those whose homes for life were in different and distant lands, proved, however, in the course of social intimacy, the occasion of a reciprocal attachment between Mr. Reed and the only daughter of Mr. De Berdt. This attachment, romantic in its origin and difficulties, as well as in faithful continuance through much that was adverse, was near changing the scene of Mr. Reed's life. With the kindest feelings and respect for him, the parents of an only daughter, educated in the metropolis, and habituated to the modes of life there, could scarcely help regarding with some repugnance a marriage, that must separate their child from them by removal to the colonies. There seemed but one way of overcoming the difficulty, and Mr. De Berdt's consent to the engagement of his daughter was given on condition that Mr. Reed would, after arranging his affairs at home, return and settle in England, either to follow his profession, or such business as the influence and opportunities of a successful London merchant might open to him.

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\* A portrait of Mr. De Berdt is honored with a place, at the present day, in the State House at Boston.

Such were the fond plans of an affectionate parent, but they were controlled to different results. There were in reserve for Reed the duties, the responsibilities, and the honors of American citizenship; and for the young Englishwoman, who shared his affections, and was willing to share his fortunes, there were reserved the cares of an American matron in the anxious and perplexed years of civil strife and revolution. In a future page of her husband's biography, it will be no more than justice to speak of the true womanly heroism of her character; her meek fortitude; of the unmurmuring and cheerful serenity, with which she encountered the exposure and the distresses of the strange condition of a soldier's wife, driven from one home after another by the progress of the war; and of the Christian spirit, which sustained her amid adversities that contrasted sadly with the enjoyments in her early years, under the roof of a prosperous and indulgent father.\*

In the spring of 1765, Reed returned to America, and, resuming his residence at Trenton, entered upon the practice of the law in the New Jersey courts. With strong impulses to exertion in his profession, he soon found another inducement, of a painful kind, in the embarrassed condition of the affairs of his family. His father had become involved in commercial mis-

fortunes, against which he was too old to struggle, and thus the family was made dependent on the son, the energies of whose character appear to have risen under the responsibilities, which unexpectedly were accumulating upon him. His talents and professional knowledge, combined with fine personal qualities for an advocate, soon introduced him to general practice, and to rank with the first lawyers in the province.

The connection, which Reed had formed in England, was the occasion of various plans to enable him to settle in that country. The appointment of special agent for the province of Massachusetts having been conferred on Mr. De Berdt, whose advanced age rendered it desirable that he should have assistance, especially if it could be combined with personal acquaintance with colonial interest and feeling, he communicated to Mr. Reed his intention to invite him to London, as soon as the agency should be put on a more permanent footing. The exasperated feeling that had arisen in the province between the Governor and the Assembly, together with the generally unsettled condition of colonial affairs, prevented any arrangement respecting the agency. In 1767, Mr. Reed received his first appointment of a political kind, being then appointed Deputy Secretary for the province of

New Jersey, an office which did not interfere with his professional engagements.

After an interval of about four years, he began to arrange for a second visit to England. He thought it important, in consideration of Mr. De Berdt's official connection with Massachusetts, to make himself personally acquainted with the affairs of that colony, and with its leading men. With this view, before sailing for England, he set out, in the summer of 1769, in company with Mr. John Dickinson, for Boston. He spent about two months there, at the time when popular feeling had been irritated by the publication of Governor Bernard's letters. This visit introduced Mr. Reed to the most active men of the day on the side of colonial rights, and was thus of importance as contributing to that familiar and confidential intimacy among public men in the several colonies, which soon after became an element of colonial combination and resistance.

In March, 1770, Mr. Reed embarked at Philadelphia for England, and, having landed in Ireland, the first piece of news that caught his eye, on taking up a London Gazette, was the death of his kind and excellent friend, Mr. De Berdt. In addition to this, on reaching London, he found that, in consequence of the mismanagement of one of the partners, Mr. De Berdt's commercial

house was nearly bankrupt. In his own father's household, Reed had already witnessed pecuniary perplexities and distress, and in his early manhood he had stoutly and hopefully struggled against them. When, after several years of assiduous and successful labor, he revisited England, with the prospect of a well earned happiness, he found his best friend in that country no longer living, and the family he had become attached to reduced from their long enjoyed and well used prosperity. In the very season of pecuniary misfortune, they lost the protection and counsel they had been in the habit of depending on, during Mr. De Berdt's long and exemplary life.

So far as Mr. Reed's course of life was shaped by these occurrences, all inducement to seek a residence in England, with a view to a professional career there, was at an end, and the influence which for a time had given such a direction to his thoughts having ceased, the land of his birth was at once and for ever looked to as the determined land of his dwelling. He remained in England some months, to assist in closing the affairs of Mr. De Berdt's firm, which was found to be irretrievably bankrupt. In May, 1770, in St. Luké's Church, in the city of London, Joseph Reed was married to Esther De Berdt. Immediately on his return to America, in the same

year, he removed from Trenton to Philadelphia, and, entering upon the practice of the law in Pennsylvania, soon had distinguished success in that province. From this time his career is that of a Pennsylvanian.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Mr. Reed's Correspondence with the Earl of Dartmouth. — Arrival of the Tea Ship. — Post-Office. — Courts of Admiralty. — Dr. Franklin and Wedderburn. — Boston Port Bill. — Popular Meetings in Philadelphia. — Pennsylvania Party Politics. — Provincial Convention. — Continental Congress. — Reed's first Acquaintance with Washington.*

BEFORE Mr. Reed's removal to Philadelphia, there was little opportunity for him to participate actively in the excitement, which was gradually increasing in the larger commercial towns during the preparatory years of the revolution. Being yet a young man, he had sought rather to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the colonial cause, and carefully to observe, both at home and during his residence as

a student in England, the progress of the controversy and the policy of the ministry. A temperament naturally ardent, and a deep conviction of the constitutional rights of the colonists, soon brought him, after his removal into Pennsylvania, into strong and active sympathy with popular resentment against the parliamentary measures. The acquaintance he had formed, while in London, with friends of the colonial cause, enabled him to cultivate a correspondence which furnished intelligence of the ministerial and parliamentary movements, and gave in return information as to the state of feeling in America. He became also, at this time, engaged in a correspondence of a peculiar and highly interesting nature, direct communication with one of the British ministry being opened to him under the following circumstances.

It was in 1772, that, on the resignation of Lord Hillsborough, the Earl of Dartmouth was appointed Secretary of State for the colonies. To this nobleman's influence, and administration of the colonial department, the friends of America looked forward, not without solicitude, but still with encouragement. Having been one of the Lords of Trade during the Rockingham administration, he had withdrawn on the retirement of that ministry, and, by acting in opposition to their successors, he was naturally regarded as a

friend to liberal measures and to the colonial right of exemption from parliamentary taxation. Lord Dartmouth's appointment gave therefore much satisfaction in America, and also to the friends of the colonial cause in England, it being hailed as an indication of the adoption of a more conciliatory policy. He was a man, too, of estimable private character, with a higher tone of religious principles than at that time generally prevailed in English society, and for which, as might be expected, he is occasionally the subject of a sneer in Horace Walpole's letters.

The agreeable anticipations of happy results from Lord Dartmouth's influence in the ministry were indulged in by Mr. Reed's connections in England. Between his father-in-law, the late Mr. De Berdt, and Lord Dartmouth, there appears to have subsisted a confidential intercourse on the subject of American affairs. After the death of Mr. De Berdt, his son, also a London merchant, continued the intercourse, and entertained the hope, that if trustworthy sources of information could be opened respecting the actual condition and temper of the colonies, the new minister might be induced to acknowledge the justice, or at least the expediency, of conciliatory measures. Being solicitous for a restoration of harmony between the mother country and colonies, Mr. De Berdt conferred with Lord Dartmouth on the sub-

ject of an unofficial communication of colonial intelligence ; and finding that it would be acceptable, he informed his relative, Mr. Reed, of the fact, and urged him to avail himself of so favorable an opportunity of reaching the ministry with a more faithful expression of colonial feeling, and a better report of the state of affairs, than was likely to be communicated through the usual channels of official correspondence. While Reed sympathized with the desire for reconciliation, he was steadfast in his conviction of the justice of the colonial discontent, and it was therefore not without diffidence, that he acceded to the proposal. He had already felt the importance of some effort to counteract, if possible, the mischief produced by the reliance the ministry placed upon mistaken information and injudicious counsel, communicated from America by official agents of the government.

Writing to De Berdt on the subject of the commercial restrictions, Mr. Reed had said, "Lord Dartmouth might make himself exceedingly popular in America by removing these restrictions. I have often had thoughts of making his Lordship a tender of my services, in pointing out some things which would be of material advantage to both countries, and tend to make his administration honorable and useful. But the difficulty of introducing it in a proper manner, and free from any suspicion of interested views, has hither-

to prevented it. The intelligence from this country has generally flowed through such corrupt channels, as would expose any minister to danger and difficulty. I think I could procure his Lordship one or two correspondents in other provinces, who would, if it was agreeable, render him any services in that way, and who have nothing to ask from him but his cheerful acceptance of their honest and disinterested endeavors to serve both the mother country and the colonies."

The series of letters which were addressed by Mr. Reed to Lord Dartmouth form a correspondence in many respects valuable. It was carefully conducted, in order to put the ministry informally, through the colonial secretary, in possession of such knowledge as would give a better direction to their policy; and it has all the vivid freshness, not only of a contemporary narrative, but of the expression of one who was actively participating in the colonial measures and feelings which he describes.. Reed's connections in Pennsylvania and the neighboring provinces, and the acquaintances he had formed in Boston, were such as to give him the best means of information. The difficulties in carrying on a correspondence of so delicate a nature were manifestly far from inconsiderable. It required very accurate observation of the course of events, and well formed judgment upon them, together

with a just sense of what was due respectively to the cause and to the correspondent. There was the restraint of conventional deference from a colonial subject in private life to one high in rank, and in official station nearly connected with the throne ; and more strongly the natural deference from a comparatively young man, inexperienced in political affairs, to a statesman of considerable parliamentary and ministerial experience.

On the other hand, there was the impulse of an enthusiastic temperament to give utterance to earnest remonstrance, and to interpose, in so fit opportunity of interposition, against the mischief of dangerous counsel and false intelligence. The scope of this memoir does not admit of the introduction here of the correspondence with Lord Dartmouth, valuable as it would be as a contribution to the history of the American revolution. It must be reserved for a more extended biography of his public services, now in preparation ; and in this place, some selections from the letters will serve to show with what ability a correspondence was conducted, in which it was difficult to avoid a conflict between fidelity to his country and respect for his correspondent. It must be borne in mind, that the letters began at a time when independence presented itself to even the most far reaching mind of the colonist, only dimly in the distance of a perplexed and per-

haps disastrous future. Pride was still felt in the sentiment of loyalty, and all that was demanded was reconciliation, the abandonment of novel oppression, and the restoration of the state of things in 1763. Professions of amity, some sincere and some hollow, were interchanging across the Atlantic; and when the colonist in Philadelphia was encouraged to address one of the constitutional advisers of the King with the frankness of familiar correspondence, he was entitled to assume that there was sympathy between them, for Lord Dartmouth's public career and private worth had caused him to be regarded as one of the friends of colonial America.

The first letter to Lord Dartmouth is dated the 22d of December, 1773. With somewhat of professional precision, Mr. Reed lays the groundwork of his correspondence in a careful statement of the case of the colonies, the cause of the discontent, and the reasoning on which it was sustained. He then describes the state of feeling in the colonies, and the condition of trade since the passage of the obnoxious revenue acts; and, as the letter was written when there was a daily expectation of the arrival of the tea ships, with the cargoes shipped by the East India Company, he informs the Secretary, in calm and explicit terms, of the course of action determined on,

and of the failure that may be expected of that enterprise for securing the payment of the impost duty on tea. When the intelligence of the intended shipments was received,

"The merchants," writes Mr. Reed, "as might be expected, first expressed their uneasiness, but in a few days it became general. Some of the principal inhabitants and merchants called a general meeting of the people, when a number of resolutions were entered into, the substance of which was, that this measure, tending to enforce the obnoxious act, should be opposed by all lawful and proper methods. A number of persons were appointed to desire the consignees to relinquish the consignment. At first they made some little hesitation; but finding the opposition to their acceptance of the trust so strong and general, they all complied, and have publicly renounced the commission. Some inconsiderate persons endeavored to deter the pilots from taking any charge of the ship in the river; but this has been generally disapproved by the inhabitants who have endeavored to counteract it. When the arrival of the ship was hourly expected, an other meeting was held of the principal inhabitants only, when it was unanimously agreed to oppose the landing of the tea, and to compel the master of the ship to return with his cargo. The mode of executing this measure, as I am

well informed, will be, that, on the first intelligence of her arrival, a number of persons, already appointed to that service, will go on board and represent to the captain the determination of the inhabitants on the subject; and the dangers and difficulties which may attend a refusal on his part. This, with the advice of the consignees, will, it is supposed, have the effect intended. If it should not, the consequences may prove fatal to himself and his vessel. The opposition to the Stamp Act was not so general, and I cannot but think any attempt to crush it would be attended with dreadful effects."

A few words of hope, at the close of the letter, convey such intimations of warning and advice as it seemed proper to give in the very beginning of the correspondence. "I cannot pretend to suggest expedients to your Lordship's wisdom and prudence; some proper ones will, I doubt not, occur. Severity has been tried. If it can be thought consistent with the supremacy and dignity of the mother country to relax, and adopt lenient measures on this occasion, it would crown your Lordship's administration with unfading honor to be the instrument of removing the remaining source of civil discord."

It was within three days after this letter was written, that the tea ship arrived in the Delaware Bay; and on the very day which completed,

with entire success, the course of action previously determined on, Reed again writes to Lord Dartmouth; and the following passage in the letter gives, with all the freshness of the hour, a simple narrative of what occurred.

"On Saturday, the 25th instant, (December, 1773,) the first certain account was received in this city that the tea ship was safely arrived in our river, but without any pilot, for, notwithstanding the endeavors of many of the inhabitants, such a general aversion and opposition to this measure of sending out the tea prevailed, that no person would afford the captain the least assistance in bringing his ship into the port. Last evening she anchored about three miles below the town, when a number of the inhabitants assembled, and sending for Captain Ayres, the master of the ship, acquainted him that it was most advisable for him not to proceed to the town, in the present temper of the inhabitants, with his ship, but to come up and inform himself of the situation of things in the city. He accordingly came up, and, after conversing with the consignees of the cargo and other inhabitants, signified his willingness to comply with the sense of the city on this occasion. Accordingly, this morning there was a general meeting of the inhabitants, to the amount of several thousands, and among them a great number of the most con-

siderable both in rank and property, when the enclosed resolutions were proposed and agreed to without hesitation. The vessel was immediately supplied with all necessaries, and in less than two hours set out on her return, and is the bearer of this letter."

After warning the Secretary, that the opposition to the landing of the cargoes of tea had been conducted by some of the principal inhabitants, and with the encouragement of well nigh all, and that the same feeling prevailed in the other cities, Reed proceeds in a strain of still deeper earnestness.

"Any further attempt to enforce this act, I am humbly of opinion, must end in blood. We are sensible of our inability to contend with the mother country by force, but we are hastening fast to desperate resolutions, and, unless internal peace is speedily settled, our most wise and sensible citizens dread the anarchy and confusion that must ensue. This city has been distinguished for peaceable and regular demeanor; nor have its citizens departed from it on the present occasion, as there have been no mobs, no insults to individuals, no injury to private property; but the frequent appeals to the people must in time occasion a change, and we every day perceive it to be more difficult to repress the rising spirit." Having urged the necessity, for several reasons,

of a total repeal of the revenue acts, he adds, in conclusion, "Your Lordship's goodness will, I hope, excuse my pleading for the country I love. But as, on the one hand, I will not conceal or misrepresent, so, on the other, I would wish to avert the impending blow. If it can be done consistently with your Lordship's wisdom and judgment, we supplicate your indulgence and kindness at this critical period, when your rank and station may enable you to heal these unhappy breaches, and restore peace and union to these divided countries."

In those feverish years immediately previous to the war, a short period of comparative repose, covering a thoughtful solicitude as to the future, occurred after the destruction of the tea in the harbor of Boston, and the return of the consignments from other ports. What would be the policy of the government in consequence of these measures was still uncertain; and, during this brief interval of doubt, Reed wrote to Lord Dartmouth, to direct his attention to certain abuses in the colonial administration. Much dissatisfaction prevailed with reference to the post-office establishment, and still more the new admiralty courts, arising in the latter from the selection and conduct of the officers.

"The first appointment," writes Mr. Reed, "was that of judges, who had made themselves

obnoxious by their conduct at the time of the Stamp Act. But the same, or rather more absurd conduct has been shown in the appointment of all the under officers. The principals live in England, and, I suppose, having an acquaintance with the commissioners at Boston, they have left to them the nomination of the deputies, so that in this city, when Mr. Ingersoll, the Judge, opened the court, every officer in it was some underling of the custom house. The register was the gauger and surveyor; the marshal one of the principal tide-waiters, &c. No measure could have been framed more ready to invite opposition and insure contempt. These officers being frequently interested in the causes depending, partly for that reason, and partly on account of their incapacity, it often becomes necessary to get indifferent persons to do their duty. The due observance of the laws of trade is so essential to the interests of the mother country, that nothing tending to weaken or enforce them is unworthy of notice. This must be my apology for these details, especially as the Judge has more than once lamented to me his unfortunate situation in this respect."

The first news from England, after the return of the tea ships, was of the examination of Dr. Franklin before the Privy Council on the publication of Governor Hutchinson's letters, and the

fierce attack made on him by the Solicitor-General, Mr. Wedderburn. This was calculated peculiarly to increase the irritability of popular feeling in Philadelphia ; and on the 3d of May, 1774, the effigies of Wedderburn and Hutchinson were carried through the streets, followed by a large concourse of people, and burned amid their acclamations. On the next day, Mr. Reed writes to his brother-in-law, in London, Mr. De Berdt,

“Lord Dartmouth as yet stands high in the esteem of the Americans ; and however former ministers have affected to despise the good will of this country, it would have much contributed to their honor and ease, if they could have obtained or preserved it. I am extremely sorry to find, both by yours and other letters, that severe measures are meditated in consequence of the destruction and return of the tea. The scurrilous treatment of Dr. Franklin is highly resented by all ranks of people, and the report of the Council upon that affair is so strange, and repugnant to the sense of this country, that we are at a loss to conceive how so respectable a tribunal should have permitted such licentious freedoms with a man of Dr. Franklin’s public character and age ; or how they could have such an opinion of the letters sent from Boston, as to regard them as having been written in the confidence of private friendship, and as containing nothing

reprehensible. Nothing can exceed the veneration in which Dr. Franklin is now held, but the detestation we have of his enemies. I was grieved to see such a report pass unanimously, and Lord Dartmouth present.\*

"We are here under no apprehension of any violence. We think the property of the English merchants in this country a sufficient security that no injury will be offered to our property, and as to our persons, the whole force of Great Britain is not sufficient to apprehend them unless taken by surprise; but it is my firm opinion, that those persons who would be marked out for such a sacrifice, so far from flying, would meet the danger, and if they did not rejoice on the occasion, would not repine at what they would esteem a glorious opportunity of sealing their country's liberties with their blood. The unanimity, spirit, and resolution, expressed at this time, afford the fullest proof that dreadful consequences must ensue from any hostilities offered. No man with us dares mention receiving the tea, any more than repealing the act with you; and if another cargo should be sent, so far from acting with the same caution, it is my opinion that it would be immediately destroyed, unless

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\* See a full account of these transactions in Sparks's *Franklin*, Vol. IV. pp. 441 - 455.

accompanied with such a force as might protect it in the landing; but who would dare to sell or buy it?"

In the same month in which this letter was written, the revolutionary movement received a new impulse from the intelligence of the passage of the Boston Port Bill. Mr. Reed's visit to Boston, several years before, and the acquaintance he had formed there with some of the leading citizens, were now to subserve a valuable use as an element in that community of feeling and spirit of coöperation, which gave such strength to the cause. The circular addressed by the meeting held at Faneuil Hall to the several provincial legislatures was fortified by private correspondence, in which the appeal could be made with the more unreserved freedom of personal friendship. Letters were written to Reed by his Boston friends, claiming his efforts in the cause of their common civil liberty.

When the time arrived for united action in Philadelphia, the cause was not without serious difficulties. Pennsylvania had already for a long while been perplexed with its party politics, local contentions which proved embarrassing now that harmonious participation in the general cause was needed. A long continued series of disputes between the proprietors and the legislative branch of the colonial government had caused much

party organization, with the usual asperity of feeling and obstinacy of opposition. The receipt of the Boston circular, and of the private letters that accompanied it, rendered the adoption of some decided measures necessary. The principal persons with whom Reed acted, in arranging the public proceedings, were John Dickinson, whose reputation was already considerable by the authorship of "The Farmer's Letters," Thomas Mifflin, afterwards General in the Continental army and Governor of Pennsylvania, and Charles Thomson, afterwards the faithful Secretary of the Congress of the revolution.

The course determined on was to call a public meeting of the principal citizens at the City Tavern. This meeting took place on the 20th of May, 1774, and was composed of the most heterogeneous materials. There were the earnest and impetuous opponents of the ministerial measures ; there were advocates of a more wary and cautious opposition ; the proprietary party had its representatives ; and members of the society of "Friends" were also present. Such were the incongruous and intractable materials that popular eloquence had to work upon. The meeting was opened by the reading of the Boston letter, after which Reed addressed them at some length in a speech which has not been preserved, but which Charles Thomson, in a private letter, de-

scribes as distinguished for "temper, moderation, and pathos." He was followed by Thomson and Mifflin, all having urged a prompt and strong declaration in favor of the people of Boston. Mr. Dickinson then spoke, recommending a more temperate expression of feeling, and a petition to the Governor for a meeting of the Assembly. A committee was appointed to answer the Boston circular, and Dickinson and Reed were placed on it. The answer is from the pen of the former. The committee also prepared a petition to Governor Penn, requesting him to convoke the Assembly, which, after being signed by near a thousand citizens, was presented, received, and the request promptly refused.

In the beginning of June, 1774, the news arrived of the passage of the two acts of Parliament, regulating the government and administration of justice in the province of Massachusetts Bay; and on the 18th of the month a town meeting was held in the State House yard, (the "Independence Square" of later days,) at which the speakers were the Reverend William Smith, the provost of the college, Joseph Reed, and Charles Thomson. The thoughts of men were turning, at this time, almost simultaneously throughout the different colonies, to that mode of action, which had not been resorted to since the Stamp Act Congress at New York, nine

years before. The popular meeting in Philadelphia recommended a Congress of deputies from all the colonies, and a committee was appointed to correspond not only with the other colonies, but with the several counties of Pennsylvania. Governor Penn's refusal to convoke the Assembly, which was neither unexpected nor much regretted, gave to the patriotic party in Philadelphia occasion to adopt the decided measure of assembling a more efficient and popular body in the form of a Provincial Convention, which soon met, although, in the mean time, the Governor, on a rumor of Indian hostilities, called the Assembly. The first act of the Convention was to prepare a statement of grievances in decided but respectful language, and full instructions to the members of the Assembly, which was to meet in a few days. Both documents are from the pen of Dickinson, the former being perhaps one of the ablest and most eloquent productions of his pen. A committee of correspondence was also appointed, consisting of Dickinson, Reed, and Thomson.

The active part, which Reed took in this strenuous but as yet pacific opposition to British measures, did not interrupt his correspondence with Lord Dartmouth. He considered himself as having made an engagement to give a faithful account of the transactions in America, and

especially in the province of Pennsylvania ; but he now writes as entertaining only a distant hope that any good will result from his communications. He had previously warned the Secretary, that a perseverance on the part of the ministry and Parliament in the obnoxious measures would lead to a perfect and complete union, among the colonies, to oppose the parliamentary claim of taxation. In June, 1774, he writes to inform his Lordship that this prediction is about to have its fulfilment.

“ The severity,” he says, “ of the administration, and the mode of condemnation, gains the Bostonians advocates, even among those who regard their conduct as criminal. This union or confederacy, which will probably be the greatest ever seen in this country, will be cemented and fixed in a General Congress of deputies from every province ; and I am strongly inclined to believe that efforts will be made to perpetuate it by annual or triennial meetings, a thing entirely new. The business proposed for the Congress is to draw up what, upon a former occasion, or perhaps upon any other, would be called a bill of rights. I believe it will also be proposed, that a certain number of deputies go personally to Great Britain on this important errand. Should this application be treated with neglect, which, in my opinion, it will not deserve, a general pause

of all importation, perhaps of exportation, and generally non-intercourse, will be proposed, and I believe succeed, though nothing of that nature will take place here at present. In the present distressing interval to the people of Boston, every measure will be devised and executed to relieve their necessities and support their spirits. For this purpose subscriptions are forming, in every part of America, to supply their poor with the necessaries of life. There has been some diversity of opinion in this place, as to the mode of showing our sympathy; but your Lordship may rely upon it, that nine tenths of the inhabitants mean to show their sense of the conduct of the mother country by adopting every possible measure for their relief; the most encouraging letters have been written to them to stand out, and by no means to make the submission required of them, and the honor of every writer is pledged to support them."

This letter closes with the following explicit and emphatic sentence. "Your Lordship may regard it as a fixed truth, that all the dreadful consequences of civil war will ensue before the Americans will submit to taxation by Parliament. I mention this, that your Lordship may not be deluded by the suggestions of designing men to expect this event, as nothing but force will ever bring it about."

Lord Dartmouth certainly could not complain, that in these letters there was any want of candor on the part of his correspondent. Reed dealt plainly with him, and wrote with respectful and genuine frankness. He gave timely and unre-served forewarning of the evil consequences, that would follow a perseverance in the obnoxious measures, and still one unheeded forewarning after another was fulfilled. While the Secretary was receiving through this private correspondence information and counsel, the accuracy and justice of which were constantly sustained by the course of events, he was also supplied with the official correspondence from the colonies, upon which, though far less trustworthy, he was more disposed, naturally perhaps, to place his confidence. While Mr. Reed was describing the depth and strength of a wide spread popular feeling, Governor Penn was shutting his eyes to the demonstrations; and, wrapping himself up in official dignity, he was, in his despatches to the government, extenuating the danger. A haughty tone, and an increase of executive force, seemed to be considered the adequate and appropriate remedies.

At the same time that Mr. Reed was representing to Lord Dartmouth the indomitable temper of the Bostonians, under the special parliamentary coercion brought to bear upon Massachusetts, and also the general and cordial

sympathy with them that was at work in the other colonies, General Gage's letters were giving assurance that the people of Boston were unsteady in their resistance, and that they were held to it only by the tyrannical influence of a few demagogues. Instead of the unpalatable truths, which came from the private Philadelphia correspondent, it was doubtless far more agreeable to ministerial pride to receive Gage's confident assertion that the act, by which Massachusetts was to be specially controlled, must sooner or later work its own way; that neither New York nor Philadelphia would agree to non-importation; that a Congress of some sort or other might possibly be obtained, but it was still at a distance; and that, after all, Boston would get little more than fair words.

After having continued the correspondence up to the time we are now speaking of, Reed began to entertain an increasing doubt upon two points, first, whether it was any longer acceptable to Lord Dartmouth, and secondly, whether any beneficial result was to be hoped from it. His doubts on the first were completely removed, while in the other respect they were much increased, by a long letter which he received from Lord Dartmouth in September, 1774. With this single exception, the correspondence was carried on entirely on one side. Lord Dartmouth, be-

sides thanking Mr. Reed for the information and advices he had communicated, acknowledges the very candid and ingenuous manner in which his sentiments had been stated, and, as if impressed with the earnestness with which, in the letters, the colonial cause was upheld, and the influence which such a writer was likely to exert in allaying or increasing the discontent, he proceeds to explain at some length, and to vindicate, the policy of the ministry.

There is an apparently sincere desire to remove misapprehension, and there is no little profession of what Lord Dartmouth had always the credit for, of friendly feeling to America, and a regard for the constitutional rights and liberties of the colonies. But it now became manifest, that such professions were accompanied with such opinions of the nature of the relation existing between the colonies and the mother country, as to recognize no more of colonial right or freedom, than was compatible with the new ministerial policy. It was plain, that the Secretary could see no other opening to reconciliation, than in unconditional subserviency on the part of the colonies. However modified or explained, the power that was claimed over them was essentially an arbitrary one. It was no wonder, that, after receiving Lord Dartmouth's letter, Mr. Reed, writing to a kinsman in a neighboring

province, exclaims, "I have a long letter of two sheets from Lord Dartmouth, with his political creed respecting America, bad enough, God knows! But if he thinks thus, what may we expect from Hillsborough and the rest!" The friendly tone of his noble correspondent, and a renewed expression of a desire of a continuance of the letters, appear not to have had the least effect in preventing him from perceiving, that, however plausible and possibly well intentioned Lord Dartmouth's professions as to colonial affairs might be, they were essentially unsatisfactory.

The steady and now rapid advance of the colonial movement was, just at this time, much strengthened by the extended personal intercourse of the patriots, occasioned by the assembling of the Congress in Philadelphia, on the 5th of September, 1774. The leading men in the middle and eastern colonies had already become personally known to each other, but communication with inhabitants of the southern provinces was as yet somewhat limited. The extent and force of colonial sympathy was not known, or at least was not strongly felt, until it was brought out by the living presence of men engaged in a common cause. How much of mutual encouragement was in this way gained, is shown by the tone of almost hilarity in the excitement with which Reed, in a familiar letter, speaks of the

first gathering of the members of the Congress of 1774.

"We are so taken up with the Congress, that we hardly think or talk of any thing else. About fifty have come to town, and more are expected. They have not fixed upon the time of beginning business, but I suppose it will be some day this week. There are some fine fellows come from Virginia, but they are very high. We understand they are the capital men of the colony, both in fortune and understanding."

Mr. Reed, though not a delegate to the Congress of 1774, appears to have been in frequent and familiar intercourse with the members in private society, and thus to have widely extended his knowledge of the state of popular opinion and feeling in the other colonies. To the valued friendships he enjoyed with several of the leading public men of the province of Massachusetts, there was now added an acquaintance, which afterwards was matured into a confidential and long cherished intimacy, and which had an important influence upon his course of life. The friendship with Washington had its beginning at this time, and it was to the influence of it, in a great measure, that Reed's career was afterwards diverted from civil to military life.

## CHAPTER III.

*Correspondence with Lord Dartmouth continued.*

*—Josiah Quincy, Junior.—Philadelphia Committee.—Meeting of the Assembly.—Reed, President of the Provincial Convention.—Close of the Dartmouth Correspondence.*

UNTIL this time, Mr. Reed's letters to Lord Dartmouth, while they were decided upon the great question of colonial discontent, had been characterized by a tone of deference and forbearance, which was appropriate to the progress of the controversy, and natural as addressed to a correspondent whom he was entitled to regard as, to a considerable degree, in sympathy with his own opinions. The letter, which he received from the Secretary, made it manifest, however, that his kindly feeling towards the colonies had been fast diminishing, amid the angry temper which was predominant at court on the subject of American affairs. Mr. Reed found, somewhat to his surprise and disappointment, that Lord Dartmouth's principles of colonial administration, to which he, in common with many of his countrymen, had been looking with some confidence, were at best delusive and unsettled. But the hope of any benefit to his country from a con-

tinuance of his correspondence, though necessarily now much enfeebled, was not wholly lost, and, besides, the personally friendly tone of Lord Dartmouth's letter seemed to forbid, as a matter of respect and courtesy on Mr. Reed's part, a sudden and unexplained cessation of his letters at this time.

However unsatisfactory the Secretary's letter was, it was a painstaking effort to explain and extenuate, as well as to justify, the policy of the ministry; and as an effort to remove the difficulties which lay on Mr. Reed's mind, respecting the intention of the administration and Parliament, it was entitled to a courteous acknowledgment. At the same time, the tone of the reply is changed to that of one, who felt himself addressing opposition instead of sympathy. The correspondence has now the more impassioned earnestness, with which wrongful sophistry must be repelled and a just cause upheld. Reed lost no time in replying to Lord Dartmouth's letter, and was thus led to write in the midst of the interest excited in Philadelphia by the first meeting of Congress. There was also an intensity of feeling occasioned by the constant expectation, that each post that arrived from the eastward might bring intelligence of the first blood shed in the colonial cause, General Gage's movements at this time being the subject of painful solicitude

and suspense. Reed, in a letter of the 25th of September, 1774, again warns the Secretary that for ten years past the government had been suffering itself to be misguided in its measures by the advices of ignorant or interested men, and that it would be as fair to judge of his Majesty from the publications of Junius, as of the colonies, from such representations as the ministry had been in the habit of placing their reliance upon.

"No king," he goes on to say, "ever had more loyal subjects, nor any country more affectionate colonists, than the Americans *were*. I, who am but a young man, well remember when the former was always mentioned with a respect approaching to adoration, and to be an *Englishman* was alone a sufficient recommendation for any office of friendship and civility. But I confess, with the greatest concern, that those happy days are passing swiftly away; and, unless some plan of accommodation can be speedily formed, the affection of the colonists will be irrecoverably lost.

"Your Lordship is pleased to say, that 'government has no intention to enslave the people of America, but to allow them all the freedom consistent with their connection with the parent state.' If we are to be thus free, should it not have been distinguished in what instance our freedom is inconsistent with the character of our

connection, that, as reasonable beings, we might be convinced of the reasonableness and propriety of being less free than our brethren land-holders in Britain? In my poor judgment, the declaratory law, and the acts passed respecting Boston, which are streams from the same fountain, degrade us from the rank of freemen; the former, indeed, does not agree with your Lordship's ideas of American liberty, which you think should be only partially restrained; whereas, this law is a general restraint enacted by a power wholly independent of us, and binding us in all cases whatsoever. A gentle tyranny is no more compatible with the rights of an English subject than a violent one; and, if the colonies were willing to submit to such a rule, I do not see what security can be given, as history strongly testifies, that free states can be as despotic and oppressive over their colonies as the most arbitrary ones.

"Your Lordship observes, that it is not material whether the British legislature have a right to lay the duty; it is sufficient they have done it, to make resistance criminal and punishment proper. Surely, my Lord, power should not usurp the place of right. If America is never to resist, let the measures of Parliament be ever so wrong and unjust, it implies the most abject

and absolute submission, and is hardly consistent with the idea of our being as free as our relations to Great Britain will admit; for I do not suppose your Lordship means, that our situation will exclude us from all the essential blessings of liberty. • There can no more be a divine right of doing wrong in Parliament, than in the King; and all the principles of the Revolution show, that there are not a few cases in which resistance is justifiable. I confess I think there is a clear distinction between supreme and absolute power, even as to Great Britain, much more as to the colonies; and, as there seems to be a necessity for a supremacy in Parliament, independent of actual representation, I submit it to your Lordship whether this supremacy might not be expressly defined, and its operation restricted within some certain limits, so as to leave no room for future disputes.”

After giving a short account of the Congress, which was still in session, and of both the unanimity of sentiment which was understood to prevail in its deliberations, which were in secret session, and of the readiness of the people to adopt any measure, even war itself, if recommended by Congress, Reed went on to describe a state of things in America, which it is surprising how any statesman of the scantiest sagacity

could disregard, and the reality of which could not be mistaken in the earnest and truthful simplicity of the description.

"I can hardly think that I am in the same place, and among the same people, so great is the alteration of sentiment. As far as I can judge, should the merchants hesitate to comply with any suspension of trade the Congress direct, the people of the country will compel them, and I know no power capable to protect them. A few days ago, we were alarmed with a report that General Gage had cannonaded the town of Boston. So general a resentment, amounting even to fury, appeared everywhere, that I firmly believe, if it had not been contradicted, thousands would have gone, at their own expense, to have joined in revenge. It was difficult to make them doubt the intelligence, or delay setting out.

"Those who served during the last war in the provincial troops, others discharged from the regulars, and many who have seen service in Germany, and migrated to this country, with such others as would have joined them, would have formed a considerable body. I believe, had the news proved true, an army of forty thousand men, well provided with everything except cannon, would, before this, have been on its march to Boston. From these appearances, and the

decided language of all ranks of people, I am convinced that, if blood be once shed, we shall be involved in all the horrors of a civil war. Unacquainted, either from history or experience, with the calamities incident to such a state, with minds full of resentment at the severity of the mother country, and stung with the contempt with which their petitions have always been rejected, the Americans are determined to risk all the consequences.

"The resolve of Congress on the resolutions of the county of Suffolk, in which there was not only unanimity of provinces, but of individual members, is to me truly astonishing, and manifests a spirit, leading to desperation, in my opinion worthy the anxious consideration of your Lordship, and every other friend of mankind. Unless some healing measures be speedily adopted, the colonies will be wholly lost to England, or be preserved to her in such a manner as to be worse than useless for years to come. I am fully satisfied, my Lord, that America never can be governed by force; so daring a spirit as animates her can only be subdued by a greater force than Great Britain can spare; and one continued conflict will ensue, till depopulation and destruction follow your victories, or the colonies establish themselves in some sort of independence. I cannot dissemble with your Lordship,

that it appears to me we are on the verge of a civil war, not to be equalled in history for its importance and fatal consequences. If the Americans had less ground for apprehension and complaint, it would be in vain to reason with men breathing bold defiance, and determined not to survive what they esteem the liberties of their country."

The ardor of Reed's spirit found utterance in such unreserved and vehement remonstrance, in which, while plain and painful truth was poured into the ministerial ear, there was no violation of the propriety of language, which was incumbent upon him in conducting such a correspondence. This letter, from which a large quotation has been made, because it is eminently characteristic of the writer, was written, as we should observe, at a period when independence was far from being a familiar wish or thought in the minds of men, still less a familiar word upon their lips; a year before the Continental army was raised, and almost two years before independence was declared. Coming from a man comparatively young, and positively inexperienced in affairs of government, it shows how highly cultivated were his powers of thoughtful observation, and with how keen a vision he was able to pierce the future, that was hanging cloudy over the course of political events in the British empire. A letter, in

which he had given full scope to his feelings and opinions, was fitly closed with these words. "Should any freedom of sentiment or expression occur to you in my letters, I hope you will remember that I am advocating the cause of the country which gave me being. I cannot see the threatening ruin without an effort to arrest it; and, if I know my own heart, its intentions are honestly to state my conscientious opinions to you, that your benevolence and public virtue may be exerted to avert the dreadful calamity of a civil war."

Writing at the same time to his English brother-in-law, Mr. De Berdt, he expressed himself, in such familiar correspondence, with no greater freedom than he had indulged in addressing the minister. "We are indeed," he writes, on the 26th of September, 1774, "on the melancholy verge of a civil war. United as one man, and breathing a spirit of the most animating kind, the colonies are resolved to risk the consequences of opposition to the late edicts of Parliament. All ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest, speak the same language, and I believe will act the same part. I know of no power in this country, that can protect an opposer of the public voice and conduct. A spirit and resolution is manifested, which would not have disgraced the Romans in their best days. I hope they will

mingle with them prudence and temperance, so as to avoid calamities as long as possible. No man dares open his mouth against non-importation. Now the Congress has recommended it, it will not stop here; non-exportation to England, Ireland, and the West Indies, and, if necessary, non-consumption of English fabrics, will be the bloodless and defensive war of the colonies, so long as hostilities are forbore by the administration; but when they commence, (if unhappily they should,) terrible consequences are to be apprehended. God only knows what will be the event of all these things. If Parliament will repeal the tea duty, and put Boston in its former station, all will be well, and the tea will be paid for. Nothing else will save this country and Britain too. My head and heart are both full."

Mr. Reed's correspondence with Lord Dartmouth was now, from the irresistible course of public events, drawing towards a close. When he next wrote, which was after the adjournment of the Congress of 1774, and the delegates had returned to their homes, it was to give assurance that the spirit and temper of the people continued as during the animation caused by the meeting. He was anxious to impress the Secretary with a knowledge of the unanimity, with which Congress denied the authority of Parliament to im-

pose taxes of any kind, or to alter the internal government of the colonies, and that the members parted with the utmost affection and kind feeling to each other, carrying to their homes a determination to see every resolution faithfully executed.

"The Americans," he proceeded to say, "are determined never to submit to the claims of Parliament, unless compelled by irresistible force; and this submission will continue no longer than the force which produces it. However visionary it may appear, at first view, to give up the commerce of the whole country, and, as a last resort, try their strength in arms with a nation so potent as Great Britain, you may depend on it, they will attempt both. Preparations are making, by military associations in every part of the country, for the last appeal; and everything indicates a fixed determination to yield to nothing but necessity. The universal claim is, to be restored to the state in which we were in 1763, though a line thus drawn would include some of the laws to which we are now opposed."

This letter closed with a piece of information, which must have been somewhat startling to the ministerial ear, from its singularity. "The Congress has inculcated, in the strongest terms, on the delegates from Boston to restrain the people of that province from any hostilities upon

General Gage, and to wait patiently the effect their measures will produce, so that, unless the General act offensively, we may hope no blood will be shed, at least for a time." This was written manifestly with unaffected simplicity, and with no purpose of disrespect; and yet what can be more remarkable and significant of the state of the controversy than this fact, that one of the constitutional advisers of the crown should be thus informed, that the King's troops owed their safety to the protecting interposition of a Congress, whose very existence was looked on as an act of imperfect rebellion? It is difficult to pass over a circumstance so mortifying to the pride of the power of the monarchy, without a reflection on the degeneracy of an administration, which, within the short space of some fifteen years, was presenting so great a contrast to the glories of the Pitt ministry.\*

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\* An old friend of Mr. Reed's, and one of his classmates at Princeton College, Stephen Sayre, was at this time, by a singular turn of fortune, one of the sheriffs of the city of London. It appears from the "*Chatham Correspondence*," that he was in frequent correspondence and intercourse with the retired minister, chiefly on the subject of American affairs. In December, 1774, Lord Chatham writes to Mr. Sayre, "Soon after I had the pleasure of seeing you, I received the extracts from the votes and proceedings of the American Congress, printed and published by order at Philadelphia, which had been withheld

From a correspondence in which there was so much of expostulation, and remonstrance, and contrariety of feeling, as in that with Lord Dartmouth, it is pleasing to turn for a moment to letters of sympathy, such as was growing daily stronger between the leading public men in the different colonies. To judge well of the character of the men of that period, we must look into the familiarity of their private correspondence, to see the motives that were actuating them, and the purity and depth of feeling, which was stirring in their hearts. Between Joseph Reed and Josiah Quincy, Junior, there had arisen an intimacy, which was strengthened by the visit of the former to Boston, and of the latter to

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from me, as the letters to others had been. I have not words to express my satisfaction, that the Congress has conducted this most arduous and delicate business with such manly wisdom and calm resolution, as do the highest honor to their deliberations. Very few are the things contained in these resolves, that I could wish had been otherwise. Upon the whole, I think it must be evident to every unprejudiced man in England, who feels for the rights of mankind, that America, under all her oppressions and provocations, holds forth to us the most fair and just opening for restoring harmony and affectionate intercourse as heretofore. I trust that the minds of men are more than beginning to change on this great subject, so little understood, and that it will be found impossible for freemen in England to wish to see three millions of Englishmen slaves in America."

Philadelphia. They were attached to each other by the sympathy of the enthusiasm of their dispositions, and by the lofty and well cultivated love of constitutional liberty, which was common to them. In the letters that passed between them, there is the deep and impressive earnestness of men animated by the spirit of a great cause, and conscious of singleness and integrity of purpose. To the level of selfish or secondary motives the cause they had at heart is not suffered to sink; and amidst the gloomiest uncertainties which perplexed them, they found hope and moral strength in the consciousness that they were contending, at whatever self-sacrifice, for a great principle.

Mr. Quincy went to England in 1774, and in October, Mr. Reed writes to him, "Instead of divided councils and feeble measures, all now is union and firmness; and I trust we shall exhibit such a proof of public virtue and enlightened zeal, in the most glorious of all causes, as will hand down the present age with the most illustrious characters of antiquity." After giving some matters of intelligence, he ends the letter by saying, "I congratulate you, my dear Sir, upon the rising glory of America. Our operations have been almost too slow for the accumulated sufferings of Boston. Should this bloodless war fail of its effect, a great majority of the

colonies will make the last appeal, before they resign their liberties into the hands of any ministerial tyrant."

It was in answer to another letter from Reed, that Quincy made that emphatic declaration, which showed with what deep solemnity he meditated upon the approaching struggle, and which, being written only a short time before his death, has the impressiveness of a dying man's voice. "I look to my countrymen with the feelings of one, who verily believes they must yet seal their faith and constancy with their blood. This is a distressing witness indeed. But hath not this ever been the lot of humanity? Have not blood and treasure, in all ages, been the price of civil liberty? Can Americans hope a reversal of the laws of our nature, and that the best of blessings will be obtained and secured without the sharpest trials? Adieu, my friend. My heart is with you; and, whenever my countrymen command, my person shall be also."

With this solemn farewell, the intercourse of these friends ended; for Quincy, on his voyage home, died at sea, at a short distance from his native shore, and a few days after its soil was first stained with blood at Lexington.

On the adjournment of the Congress, in October, 1774, a public entertainment was given to the delegates by more than five hundred of the

citizens of Philadelphia ; and it was manifest that the union of the colonies was greatly strengthened by the ties not only of public interest, but of private friendship. Independence, let it be borne in mind, was still not yet the object aimed at. Redress of grievances and repeal of the obnoxious statutes were to be accomplished, if possible, by means compatible with colonial allegiance. Congress had resolved on the pacific remedy of non-importation ; and, having pledged themselves and their constituency to adhere to it, it became the best patriotism to carry that policy faithfully and strictly into execution, and to forbear from everything that was likely to precipitate actual hostilities. If blood was to be shed, it was to be in defence against aggression.

To carry into effect the measures determined on by Congress, a committee of sixty persons was elected in Philadelphia, in November, 1774. Reed was a member of it, together with Dickinson, Thomson, Mifflin, Clymer, and other influential citizens. The committee proceeded with great energy to the discharge of its duties, in which the state of public feeling prevented any difficulty in accomplishing what was resolved on. After the 1st of December, every cargo that arrived from England, Ireland, or the Plantations, was delivered to the committee ; and “so great

is the unanimity," says Reed, in one of his letters, "that no one has refused compliance with this self-denying ordinance. How long this spirit will continue, it is difficult to determine; but, from the calmness and deliberation with which everything is done, the measures now taken seem better calculated for duration than anything of the kind that we have attempted before."

When the Assembly of the province met, resolutions were passed, to the great surprise of Governor Penn, approving the transactions of the Congress, and delegates were chosen for the Congress which was expected to meet in the following month of May. An apprehension, however, that the proprietary influence might still be exerted in the legislature, in such a way as to embarrass the popular movement, induced the general committee to arrange a plan of a Provincial Convention, to be composed of members chosen in all the counties of Pennsylvania, the ostensible object being the encouragement of domestic manufactures, as auxiliary to the non-importation resolutions of Congress. This measure was determined on, not, however, without some doubts whether it might not interfere with the plan of continuing the Assembly in harmonious coöperation, if possible, with the legislatures of the other colonies.

The Provincial Convention met on the 23d of

January, 1775, and Mr. Reed was elected president of it. The session continued until the 28th of the month, when the Convention was dissolved, after having adopted resolutions expressive of their views. The deliberations had been chiefly confined to the encouragement of manufactures, and such cultivation of the soil as would best provide for the exigencies, which the non-importation agreements might occasion. It was intended taking some steps towards arming and disciplining the province; but so general a disinclination appeared, that the proposal was laid aside without discussion. Reed opposed it, both publicly and privately, as a measure, which at that time was uncalled for, and still more, for a reason which was conclusive against it, because it would have been in rash and unjustifiable conflict with the course of action, which was prescribed by the Congress, to whose deliberate and united judgment the nation had confided the question of the mode of resistance. And now, when, in after ages, the character of the American revolution is to be calmly judged of, it is not the least praise of the patriots of our heroic age, that their spirits were so wisely tempered, that war, civil war, was not precipitated by any undisciplined rashness or indiscretion of theirs, and that the guilt of the first shedding of blood did not rest upon them.

It was shortly after the adjournment of the Provincial Convention, that Mr. Reed's correspondence with Lord Dartmouth ended. In the letter he had received from the Secretary, a continuance of the correspondence was desired; but, in consequence of the prominent part he was taking in the colonial resistance, he began to doubt whether his letters were likely to be welcome any longer, and whether he was an acceptable correspondent to a member of the ministry. The inclination to continue his letters was, no doubt, declining too, with disappointment that Lord Dartmouth did not resign. The motive of delicacy is frankly stated in the first sentences of his letter of the 10th of February, 1775.

"My Lord; As I have never disguised my sentiments on the unhappy dispute between the mother country and the colonies, nor concealed my intention to act in accordance with them, I have been led to doubt whether your Lordship may not deem the honor you do me inconsistent with your public character, and consider yourself bound to enforce those measures, which the dignity of Great Britain may be thought to require, but of which a far less favorable opinion is entertained here. If so, a word to Mr. De Berdt will be sufficient, and I will forbear to trouble your Lordship further."

He felt it due, however, to himself and to the

cause, to set forth both the moderation and the firmness with which the resistance of the colonies was maintained, and thus to show that the temper of the Americans was neither a lawless nor a servile one. "My influence," he writes, "has latterly been exercised not to widen the breach, but to dispose the minds of those around me to the adoption of such measures, as may be consistent with the true dignity and interest of the mother country, and the safety of this. I hope and believe I have been instrumental, in a degree, and within a short time, in guarding this city and province from acts, which had an irritating tendency; and, while I am thus employed, I trust I am acting the part of a good subject and citizen. On the other hand, I cannot acquiesce in the claim of Parliament to bind us in all cases, but esteem it my indispensable duty to oppose what, in my poor judgment, degrades me from the rank of a free citizen."

The season had not yet passed for reconciliation; and, in the spirit which was manifested by the Congress of 1774 in their public addresses, Reed sought now to satisfy the Secretary that the colonists had not lost all disposition for an accommodation of the controversy, and to suggest some of the means of restoring harmonious relations.

"I am happy," he says, "in observing and

communicating to your Lordship, that, notwithstanding all that has passed, much remains of that old affection to our parent state, which distinguished our happier days; that we still regard a contest with her as the greatest possible evil next to the loss of our rights and privileges; and that there is a general disposition to a reconciliation upon any terms consistent with those essential rights, which ought to distinguish an English colonist from those of an arbitrary state."

He did not, however, disguise from Lord Dartmouth, that with this feeling there also existed a temper, which long continued irritation made it dangerous further to provoke. "The King's speech was received with a kind of sullenness, which I cannot describe, which, however, was strongly expressive of a determination not to submit without a struggle, in case measures of conciliation were rejected by Great Britain. There is scarcely a man in this country, my Lord, out of office, not of immediate appointment from England, who will not resist for ever the claim of taxation by Parliament."

After showing in what respects the government might substitute conciliation for coercion, the concluding words of the letter are, "This country will be deluged with blood, before it will submit to taxation by any other power than its own legislature."

With this solemn warning did Reed's correspondence with Lord Dartmouth end; and, in little more than two months afterwards, the battle of Lexington began the eight years' war of the revolution, waged from Massachusetts to Georgia. At the same time that the Colonial Secretary was receiving, from his private correspondent in Philadelphia, temperate and wise counsel, together with impressive forewarning, the official correspondence of General Gage was recommending the putting a respectable force in the field, the seizure of the most obnoxious of the leaders, and the proclamation of pardon to others, as the ready remedy for colonial discontent. If, in after years, as the war went on in one campaign after another; as 'the King's troops gained victories without reaping the fruits of victory, and suffered defeats which brought all the disasters of defeat, until, at length, the baffled monarch and ministry were constrained to recognize the independence of America'; if, in such years, Lord Dartmouth's mind had recurred to the official and private letters, which reached him from America before hostilities began, he could not have failed, on comparing them, to feel how, under the influence of the former, an infatuated ministry had given itself up to bad counsels and a vicious policy, and, on the other hand, how much of candor and political sagacity had been unheeded in

the private letters from his correspondent in Philadelphia.

At the same time that Mr. Reed wrote his last letter to Lord Dartmouth, he wrote to Mr. De Berdt, that there were but two modes to be thought of, to prevent apprehended extremities; one by temporizing, repealing the acts lately passed, which distressed Boston, and the tea duty, leaving the question of right undiscussed, and at the same time protecting the dignity of the mother country by a payment of the damages sustained by the destruction of the cargoes of tea, about which, in that case, there would be no difficulty; the other, to propose to the several assemblies to send commissioners to England to settle a constitution for America, and, as a preliminary, to suspend the operation of the late acts, the continuance of which would be regarded as a species of *duress*, excluding the idea of a free conference or voluntary submission.

He represented, also, that it had now become necessary, if overtures for reconciliation were to be made, that they should come from Great Britain; and that, if this was derogatory to the dignity of the government, it had brought the necessity upon itself by the contempt with which all applications from America had been received, tending to draw in question the absolute, uncontrolled powers of Parliament. "My opinion," writes

Mr. Reed to his English relative, “of the system of colony administration must be wholly changed, before I can think of supporting any measure of the British government founded upon it; but in truth the support of any single person, of much more consequence than I can pretend to be, will be of little consequence in a country where the people more generally read, discuss, and judge for themselves, than perhaps any other in the world.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Appointed Military Secretary to Washington.—Campaign at Cambridge.—Return to Philadelphia.—Washington's Correspondence.—Pennsylvania Politics.—Reed elected to the Assembly.—Constitution of 1776.—Opinions on the Subject of Independence.*

THE determination, which Mr. Reed had gradually formed, of discontinuing his correspondence with Lord Dartmouth, was not altered, although strong solicitations to resume it were communicated to him from the Secretary through Mr. De Berdt. Nor did he find sufficient encouragement to do so in the assurance, which was given to

him, of some public benefit having resulted from his letters. The dissatisfaction he had expressed, in one of them, respecting the manner in which American petitions had been received by the government, was privately spoken of as a cause for the gracious reception the King, as Lord Dartmouth informed Mr. De Berdt, gave to the Address from the Congress, which was delivered by the Secretary officially, and not by the agents. Careful reflection on the nature of the controversy, and observation of the state of feeling in Great Britain and America, satisfied the mind of Reed, that a gracious manner of receiving a petition was an inconsiderable remedy for difficulties that lay much deeper; and, however desirous he was, from personal as well as public motives, that amicable intercourse between the two countries should be restored, he had ceased to be hopeful of reconciliation.

As chairman of the general committee in Philadelphia, Mr. Reed was actively engaged in the measures adopted for the relief of the inhabitants of Boston, and, when the popular resentment was suddenly excited to a high pitch by the news of the battle of Lexington, the sympathy with their New England fellow countrymen was shown by the Philadelphians in supplies of ammunition. It was just one month before Warren sealed his devotion to the cause of his

country by his life's blood, that he wrote to Reed, "The sympathy, which in your kind letter you discover, both in our sufferings and successes in opposing the enemies of the country, is a fresh proof of that benevolence and public spirit which I ever found in you." A military organization was begun by the formation of battalions of the "Pennsylvania Associated Militia," in one of which Reed was chosen Lieutenant-Colonel.

When General Washington, by virtue of his appointment as Commander-in-chief, proceeded to the eastward in the latter part of June, 1775, he was accompanied by a number of the citizens of Philadelphia as far as New York, and by Mr. Reed as far as Cambridge, the place of the first head-quarters. In the course of a few days, on the 4th of July, his appointment by the General as his secretary was announced. This unexpected change from his professional course of life was caused by considerations of the public service, and the earnest wishes of Washington, when about to undertake the arduous duty of organizing the first Continental army. Mr. Reed appears to have left home with no expectation of such absence as this appointment made necessary, and of which the first intimation to his family and friends was communicated from Cambridge. The appointment was accepted from a simple sense of duty and of personal friendship

for Washington, for the functions were not of such a nature as to hold out the attraction of public applause or honor, important as they were in connection with many difficult and wearisome details of the labors of the Commander-in-chief.

In accepting the office, Mr. Reed was separating himself suddenly, somewhat against the judgment of his friends, from professional engagements, which were numerous and important; his pecuniary means were far from ample, even in the simple style of living in those days, and uninterrupted attention to his profession was most desirable for his family. He was leaving behind a wife of delicate constitution, with the care of young children at her feet, and to whose memory, as one of the women of the revolution, it is due to state, that she shared in the self-sacrificing spirit of her husband by her fortitude and unrepining acquiescence in the duty of his absence.

Living, as Reed did, in the familiar intimacy of a member, of Washington's family, at headquarters, the acquaintance which had been formed between them in Philadelphia now ripened into a friendship, which led to a correspondence that was of a most affectionate and confidential character, and continued during the arduous periods of the war. In urging Mr. Reed's acceptance of an appointment of this kind, General Wash-

ington appears to have had in view much more than the services of a ready and skilful writer; he sought to secure the assistance of one, whose personal energy and whose knowledge of public affairs might be useful to him in many ways, amid the multitude of his duties, and, even more than this, one on whom his judgment and friendship he might rely as a confidential counsellor, and to whom, as he appears to have done, he might unburden his mind amid the anxieties and perplexities of his situation.

How much Washington deplored even a temporary separation from his first secretary, and what value he set upon his services, appears from several of his letters. In one he writes, "My mind is now fully disclosed to you, with this assurance sincerely and affectionately accompanying it, that, whilst you are disposed to continue with me, I shall think myself too fortunate and happy to wish for a change." Again, "I could wish, my good friend, that these things may give a spur to your inclination to return; I feel the want of your ready pen greatly." The important and confidential nature of the office appears from a letter to Mr. Reed, in which, speaking of another of his secretaries, he says, "Though sensible, clear, and perfectly confidential, he has never yet moved upon so large a scale as to comprehend at one view the diversity of mat-

ter which comes before me, so as to afford that ready assistance, which every man in my situation must stand more or less in need of. If he should go, I shall be really distressed beyond measure, as I know of no persons able to supply your places, in this part of the world, with whom I would choose to live in unbounded confidence. In short, for want of acquaintance with the people hitherward, I know of none who appears to me qualified for the office of secretary."

Amid the manifold and arduous duties, which were accumulated upon Washington at the beginning of the war, his admirable habits of business, and his ability in correspondence, still left it important for him to be relieved as far as possible in the composition of letters, which could be intrusted to an able and confidential secretary. It was in this, among other respects, that the services of Reed proved valuable to him. The nature of the secretaryship appears from the manuscripts, which are preserved, of the original draughts of letters in Reed's handwriting, with alterations and interlineations by Washington. It is not the smallest of the honors of the subject of this memoir, that he was selected by such a man as Washington, as one whom he could trust with the representation of his opinions, frequently on occasions of much responsibility, and which could only be accomplished in

connection with habits of unreserved and confidential intimacy.

Unprepared as Reed was, when he left Philadelphia, for a protracted absence, he remained in Washington's family until the chief difficulties in organizing an army of the new levies were overcome, and the regular investment of Boston somewhat diminished the active duties in camp. Being well acquainted with the solicitude of the Commander-in-chief to make an attack on Boston, or strike some decisive blow, Mr. Reed delayed his return to Philadelphia, until, after the plan was abandoned, it seemed pretty well ascertained that the British force had no disposition to begin offensive operations, and Washington's almost impetuous desire was repressed by his military council. After four months' tour of duty as secretary, Reed returned home in the autumn of 1775, his place being supplied by a temporary appointment.

The daily and intimate personal intercourse of Washington with Reed was now succeeded by a full and frequent correspondence, in which the General seemed to find relief for a mind perplexed and oppressed, by giving free utterance to his feelings in a tone, which he was assured would not be mistaken for unreasonable querulousness by one who knew well the difficulties of his situation, and deeply sympathized with him. On his re-

turn to Pennsylvania, Mr. Reed found himself embarrassed by the conflict between duties of a public and private nature, which detained him there, and a desire to return, to render assistance to Washington. The progress of the war had not yet affected the state of business in the courts of law, and, in order to facilitate the return of his secretary, Washington wrote to one of the Virginia delegation in Congress, to induce the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania to accommodate Mr. Reed's professional engagements.

To Reed himself, Washington wrote, saying, "With respect to what you have said of yourself and your situation, to what I have already said on this subject I can only add, that, whilst you leave the door open to my expectation of your return, I shall not think of supplying your place;" and again, "Real necessity compels me to ask you whether I may entertain any hopes of your returning to my family. If you can make it convenient, and will hint the matter to Colonel Harrison, I dare venture to say, that Congress will make it agreeable to you in every shape they can. My business increases very fast, and my distresses for want of you along with it." Immediately after having written an urgent letter for Reed's return, Washington, with fine delicacy, writes, "In my last, by Mr. John Adams, I communicated my distresses to you, on

account of my want of your assistance. Since this, I have been under some concern at doing it, lest it should precipitate your return before you were ripe for it, or bring on a final resignation, which I am unwilling to think of, if your return can be made convenient and agreeable."

Although still prevented from rejoining the Commander-in-chief, Mr. Reed was sedulous in rendering such service to him as was in his power, in the way of information, and the frank counsels which their friendship warranted. The cordial manner in which such communications were welcomed, while it illustrates the intimacy that was cherished between them, serves also to show a fine trait in the character of Washington, which perhaps has not been sufficiently observed amidst its higher and more heroic qualities. He writes, "I am much obliged to you for the hints contained in both your letters, respecting the jealousies which you say are gone abroad. I have studiously avoided, in all letters intended for the public eye, I mean for that of the Congress, every expression that could give pain or uneasiness; and I shall observe the same rule with respect to private letters, further than appears absolutely necessary for the elucidation of facts. I cannot charge myself with incivility, or, what in my opinion is tantamount, ceremonious civility, to the gentlemen of this colony; but if

such my conduct appears, I will endeavor at a reformation, as I can assure you, my dear Reed, that I wish to walk in such a line as will give most general satisfaction."

And again, "The hints you have communicated from time to time not only deserve, but do most sincerely and cordially meet with, my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor, in my estimation, give a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors; the man who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others must do this, because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove prejudices which are imbibed against him. For this reason, I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for, as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean, without departing from that great line of duty, which, though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may, nevertheless, bear a scrutiny."

It is in the same letter, January 14th, 1776, that Washington thus unburdens his full heart to his friend.

"The reflection upon my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour, when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what cause it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket upon my shoulder, and entered the ranks; or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these, and many other difficulties which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies; for surely, if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labor under.

"Could I have foreseen the difficulties which have come upon us, could I have known that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say; but this much I will answer for, that no opportunity can

present itself earlier than my wishes ; but, as this letter discloses some interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy till I hear it gets to your hand, although the conveyance is thought safe."

On his return to Philadelphia, Mr. Reed found the political affairs of the province of Pennsylvania in a state of perplexity and uncertainty, which it would hardly be appropriate to attempt to describe in a work like this. Party animosity, growing out of a conflict with the proprietary influences, had been already of many years' standing, and which, after having disturbed Pennsylvania in its colonial condition, was now about to take the new forms which continued to agitate it as a state. It was a condition of things calculated seriously to embarrass coöperation in the common cause of the country, and Reed found that, on this account, his presence in Philadelphia was important at this time.

There were influences adverse to colonial resistance, which it was necessary to counteract and restrain, which was the more difficult to accomplish, from the fact that those influences had a large share in the administration of the government of the province. Apart from differences of opinion, which, of course, prevailed in all parts of the country, in 1775 and the early part of 1776, as to the extent to which colonial resistance should be carried, and what modes of

opposition should be adopted, the chief conflict of opinion in Pennsylvania was the somewhat local question, whether the charter institutions ought to be continued or abandoned, there being this peculiarity, it must be remembered, that, the Governor having no power to prorogue or dissolve the Assembly, the people were not necessarily obliged to have resort to conventions to supply the place of a legislative assembly.

Dr. Franklin, and others who had been adverse to the proprietary government, naturally desired that the revolutionary changes should not spare the existing system, while others thought it best to continue, if possible, the charter institutions, and, by the agency of the Assembly, of which many of the popular party were members, to carry on the government effectively in concert with the other colonies. This latter opinion was entertained by Reed, until he lost the hope of adapting the charter system to the exigencies of the times. Dickinson and Charles Thomson continued to deprecate the abandonment of the system, as not only unnecessary, but injurious to the cause of the country.

The variety of opinion on this subject, and the presence in the Assembly of not a few loyalist members, had the effect of rendering the course of that body perplexed and uncertain. The doubts which prevailed, as to what might

be expected from the proceedings of the legislature, threw the responsibility for all active measures upon the Committee of Safety, whose energy became the substitute for the inertness of the Assembly, especially in all matters of military preparation, and the collection and manufacture of ammunition. Of the Committee of Safety Reed was chosen the chairman, in which capacity he was charged, among other duties, with that of addressing the Provincial Convention of New Jersey, to induce a coöperation in arranging defences of the Delaware River, and raising an artillery corps for that special service, in anticipation of an attack on the central colonies.

In January, 1776, Mr. Reed was elected a member of the Assembly, in the place of Mifflin, who declined the seat. His colleague from the city was Dr. Franklin, who soon after resigned, for a reason which now seems remarkable, considering his subsequent career, the infirmities of age, and was succeeded by Rittenhouse. Reed took his seat in February, and was, by special order, added to the committee on grievances. He appears to have been an active and prominent member for more than four months, at the expiration of which time he withdrew, for the purpose of rejoining General Washington at New York.

In accepting a seat in the Assembly, he con-

templated the performance of a special duty, on the fulfilment of which it was his intention to return to camp. On hearing of his election, Washington wrote, from Cambridge, "I congratulate you on your election, though I consider it as the *coup-de-grace* to my expectation of ever seeing you a resident of this camp again. I have only to regret the want of you, if this should be the case, and I shall do it the more feelingly, as I have experienced the good effects of your aid." But, in answer to this friendly expression of regret, Reed wrote to assure him of his intention to return to head-quarters with as little delay as possible, communicating, at the same time, the fact, that Congress had acceded to the General's proposition that more suitable provision should be made for the office of secretary, on account of the extraordinary services which devolved upon it.

The special duty, which Reed was solicitous to accomplish in the Assembly, was to make such changes as would bring the legislature, under the charter, into more active harmony with the popular sentiment of the colony. This was to be effected chiefly by increasing the representation, and by taking off the instructions to the delegates in Congress, which had been adopted in November, 1775, and by which the delegation from Pennsylvania was "strictly enjoined, on be-

half of the colony, to dissent from and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that may cause or lead to a separation from our mother country, or a change of the form of this government." These changes, with some others of a like tendency, were the objects which Mr. Reed, on accepting a place in the Assembly, avowed his intention to devote his chief endeavors to accomplish. By this course, he thought that the coöperation of Pennsylvania in the common cause would be best secured, and the confusion and embarrassment avoided, which would probably attend a sudden overthrow of the charter of the colony.

The strength of the Tory party in the charter Assembly, and the hesitation of doubting men, proved, however, serious obstacles, and it was only by laborious and unintermittent exertions that the changes were effected. The increase of the number of representatives was determined on, and Dickinson and Reed were placed on the committee to arrange the change. When, somewhat later, it was resolved that new instructions should be prepared for the delegates in Congress, they also served together on the committee appointed to draft them. These changes, however, proved inadequate, in consequence of the force of influences adverse to the revolutionary movement, and all efforts on the part of the patriot

friends of the charter failed in saving it. In a memoir of this kind, it would not be appropriate to trace particularly the transition from the charter to the new constitution; a change, that was at last effected more by irresistible revolutionary impulse, than by deliberate choice.

The popular feeling was quickened, and grew impatient, as the approach of hostilities became more apparent. At an early day in the month of May, the sound of distant firing down the Delaware River was heard, the first sound of actual war which reached this part of the colonies, at the spirited action between the sloop-of-war Roebuck and the gondolas manned by Philadelphia sailors. On the 10th of the same month, the important resolution in Congress, reported by John Adams, was adopted, recommending the adoption of new governments in the several colonies; and, in a few days, the resolution was fortified by a preamble, declaring that the exercise of authority under the crown should be totally suppressed. The citizens of Philadelphia met, to consider what measures were necessary on the dissolution of the government; and it was concluded to call a convention, and to protest against the Assembly doing any business until the sense of the province was taken in the convention. After this, the functions of the Assembly gradually expired; and, in September,

1776, the new constitution, which had been formed by the convention, was proclaimed.

During this interval between Mr. Reed's return from camp to Philadelphia and his rejoining General Washington, the correspondence between them was full and frequent, written with that affectionate cordiality which characterized their friendship. Among the letters of Washington at this period of the war, there are none which surpass those addressed to Reed, in interest, for particular information and unreserved expression of opinion and feeling. There appears to have been a very complete sympathy in their views of the state and prospects of public affairs. On the great question of independence, on which there was, even until a late day, so much variety of sentiment, there was no difference in their minds.

It was for some time, even before the beginning of hostilities, that Reed had ceased to regard the prospect of reconciliation between England and the colonies in any other light than an improbable result of the contest, and his thoughts were early turning to independence as the natural and unavoidable consequence of the long protracted and unremedied grievances. In September, 1775, writing from camp to a member of his family, he remarks, that a return to the unsuspecting confidence and affection between the two coun-

tries is rather to be wished than expected; adding, in the same letter, "I have no notion of being hanged for half treason. When a subject draws his sword against his prince, he must cut his way through, if he means afterwards to sit down in safety."

Early in March, 1776, he writes to the same kinsman, "I look upon separation from the mother country as a certain event, though we are not yet so familiarized to the idea as thoroughly to approve it. Some talk of the commissioners, but so faintly, that it is easy to see they do not expect any benefit, honor, or safety from the negotiation. The Congress have acceded to every proposition the General has made, as to myself, so that I expect to set out for camp as soon as I have removed my family either to Burlington or Haddonfield, and the session of the legislature is over. The Congress are paving the way to a declaration of independence, but I believe will not make it until the minds of the people are better prepared for it, than as yet they are."

At the same date, he wrote to Washington, "There is a strange reluctance in the minds of many to cut the knot, which ties us to Great Britain; particularly in this colony and to the southward. Though no man of understanding expects any good from the commissioners, yet

they are for waiting to hear their proposals before they declare off." He shortly after informs Washington, that "many of the most timid, and those who have hankered so much after reconciliation, seeing so little of a spirit of that kind in Great Britain, have come off very much from their sentiments, the result of old prejudices and new fears."

On the subject of the expected commissioners from England, as well as upon that of independence, Washington and Reed appear to have been exchanging opinions in entire accordance. Reed writes, in March, 1776, "To tell the truth, my dear General, I am infinitely more afraid of these commissioners than their generals and armies. If their propositions are plausible, and behavior artful, I am apprehensive they will divide us. There is so much suspicion in Congress, and so much party on this subject, that very little more fuel is required to kindle the flame. It is high time for the colonies to begin a gradual change of delegates. Private pique, prejudice, and suspicion, will make its way into the breasts of even good men, sitting long in such a council as ours; and whenever that is the case, their deliberations will be disturbed, and the public interest of course suffer."

Washington replied, "If the commissioners do not come over with full and ample powers to

treat with Congress, I sincerely wish they may never put their feet on American ground, as it must be self-evident, in the other case, that they come over with insidious intentions, to distract, divide, and create as much confusion as possible. How, then, can any man, let his passion for reconciliation be never so strong, be so blinded and misled, as to embrace a measure evidently designed for his destruction? No man does, no man can, wish the restoration of peace more fervently than I do; but I hope, whenever made, it will be upon such terms as will reflect honor upon the councils and wisdom of America. With you, I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects."

During Mr. Reed's stay in Philadelphia, his return to head-quarters, to resume the office of secretary, was at no time lost sight of by either Washington or himself. In reply to a letter written as early as February, the General answers, "Your favor of the 18th gives me much pleasure, as I am led to hope I shall see you of my family again. The terms upon which you come will be perfectly agreeable to me, and I should think you neither candid nor friendly if your communications on this subject had not been free, unreserved, and divested of that false

kind of modesty, which too often prevents the elucidation of points important to be known."

Very shortly, however, after these arrangements were made, the evacuation of Boston by the British army, in the month of March, rendered Reed's departure from Philadelphia less important, and enabled him to remain there to take part in the measures in the Assembly of the province, which have been spoken of above, and upon the successful issue of which so much of the public safety was supposed to depend.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Appointed by Congress Adjutant-General of the Continental Army.—Campaign in New York.—Arrival of Lord Howe.—Letter of Robert Morris.—Interviews with Officers bearing Flags of Truce.—Conference between Washington and Colonel Paterson, the British Adjutant-General.—Military Plans.—Reed's Letters to his Wife.*

WHEN the American army moved southward to New York, Mr. Reed again found himself embarrassed by opposite demands upon his services in

the cause of his country; on the one hand, his duties in the Assembly, at a critical period of Pennsylvania affairs, and, on the other, the personal as well as official solicitude of General Washington to have him again connected with his military family. Very soon after reaching New York, Washington writes to him, "When, my dear Sir, will you be with me? I fear I shall have a difficult card to play in this government, and wish for your assistance and advice to manage it. I have not time to add more, than that I am, dear Sir, yours, most affectionately."

It was in reserve, however, for Reed to resume his connection with the army in a much more responsible station than that of military secretary to the Commander-in-chief. When, in 1775, he accepted an appointment at head-quarters, it was doubtless regarded by him as a mere temporary measure, brought about chiefly by the friendly solicitations of Washington, and without any intention of abandoning his profession, and exchanging a civil for a military life. The association with the camp lasted long enough, perhaps, to serve the two purposes of giving him a taste for military service, and of showing to Washington that his secretary had a facility in adapting himself to this new sphere of duty, and at the same time no small share of executive energy, together with a promptness and soundness of judgment

which Washington appears to have placed much confidence in. The office of Adjutant-General of the Continental army was now vacant by the promotion of General Gates; and when Washington visited Philadelphia in the latter part of May, 1776, he had a personal conference with Congress, which led them to appoint Reed to the vacant post on the 5th of June. With the decided opinions which Reed had formed of the public cause, he was, at the time when he was chosen Adjutant-General, in a state of painful perplexity as to the course he should pursue, whether to serve his country in the civil department of public life, continuing at the same time, as far as was practicable, his professional labors, or to devote himself to military service, in which he had no experience.

These difficulties were increased by the general confusion, that was beginning to prevail in the pursuits of private life, and by his finding himself with inadequate means of providing for those who were dependent upon him, a family, comprising not only a wife and young children, but other relatives. His young wife had left her native land, to share his affections and fortunes in the colonies; and, after only a few years of tranquil and happy married life, was now about to encounter the first of that series of anxieties and distresses, amid which the meek

fortitude and gentle heroism of her character appear never to have forsaken her.

Mr. Reed spared his wife the painful duty of giving her consent to his military appointment, by accepting it without consultation with her, whose judgment on other occasions was so much valued by him. She was absent at Burlington, in the neighboring province of New Jersey, whither he had already removed his family when expecting to resume the station of secretary at head-quarters. He writes to her,

" You will be surprised, but not, I hope, dejected, when I tell you that a great revolution has happened in my prospects and views. Yesterday the General sent for me, and, in a very obliging manner, pressed me to accept the office of Adjutant-General, which General Gates lately filled. The proposition was new and surprising, so that I requested till this day to consider of it. I objected my want of military knowledge; but several members of Congress and the General treated it so lightly, and, in short, said so many things, that I have consented to go. I have been much induced to this measure by observing, that this province will be a great scene of party and contention this summer. The courts are stopped, consequently no business done in my profession, and at all events my time so engrossed, that I

have not a moment to devote to keeping up my stock or adding to my law knowledge. The appointments of the office are equal to seven hundred pounds per annum, which will help to support us till these calamitous times are at an end. Besides, this post is honorable, and, if the issue is favorable to America, must put me on a respectable stand. Should it be otherwise, I have done enough to expose myself to ruin. I have endeavored to act for the best, and hope you will think so."

In the middle of June, 1776, Reed, leaving his wife and children in New Jersey, proceeded to New York, where he joined Washington, and entered upon his military duties as Adjutant-General, with the rank of Colonel. The approaching campaign, which proved so eventful, it was expected would be found very different from the campaign at Boston, where the enemy was besieged in the city, and the American army intrenched in the neighborhood, and where no general engagement in the open field took place. The purpose now was to raise an army strong enough for field operations, and to bring them to a proper state of discipline. With raw and inexperienced troops, unused to the restraints of military rule, and impatient often of protracted service, the task of discipline was most arduous. In the labors and difficulties of such service,

the office of Adjutant-General of course shared largely.

The campaign, which began in the summer of 1776, comprised the important series of events from the battle of Long Island to the retreat into New Jersey, and the revival of the American cause by the success at Trenton and Princeton. It does not belong to this memoir to trace it, except to illustrate the personal relations of the subject of this biography to the troubled times in which his lot was cast. Mr. Reed's private and familiar correspondence, consisting chiefly of the frequent letters to his wife, has been completely preserved. It furnishes, in the simplest and most unaffected form, a narrative of all that was passing in the busy and anxious scene around him; and it gives unreserved expression to the various feelings, which prevailed from day to day, under different circumstances, in a camp of untried and in a great measure undisciplined soldiers.

The publication of such a correspondence, written with no thoughts of its ever passing beyond the perusal of a family circle, might in a more extended memoir, the mere domestic details alone being suppressed, best illustrate the character of the writer, and the sufferings and privations of those times of trial. It would show, that, amid the inevitable alternations of hope and

apprehension, of eager confidence and discouragement, freely uttered in the confidential letters of a husband to his wife, the writer never wavered in the lofty and generous sentiments, which the conviction of the justice of his cause inspired, and that the motives which actuated him were never lowered beneath a pure sense of duty, and of devotion to his country. It would be manifest, too, from all that fell from Reed's pen in the unguarded openness of a domestic correspondence, that, when once his resolution was taken, that the colonies were justified in asserting independence, and their only safety lay in it, even before the public councils had determined on the measure, he never looked back, nor, when the contest was most unequal, and well nigh desperate, turned in thought to voluntary submission as the refuge of the colonies.

The other side of this familiar correspondence, consisting of the letters written by the wife, in her place of retreat, to the husband in camp, is entitled to be briefly characterized as illustrating the character of the young matron. With the father of her children, whose life was their dependence, absent in scenes of danger, a peaceful profession unexpectedly changed to a soldier's life, no murmur broke from her, no word of natural repining or reproach was uttered to per-

plex him in holding the path of duty, no tender calculation was thought of to reconcile the safety of his honor with the welfare of herself and her children; but the depth of her affection, and the strength of her character, to all appearance one of the gentlest, was shown in the placid acquiescence in that stern necessity of duty which separated them, placing him in danger, and leaving her with the arduous responsibility of an unprotected family. The future was all dark before them.

In June, 1776, when the American army was awaiting in inactive expectation the arrival of the British force in the harbor of New York, Reed writes to his wife, "We are hourly expecting the fleet to arrive here. Unless this army is speedily and considerably reënforced, I doubt we shall wage very unequal war. Keep up your spirits, as I endeavor to do mine, reflecting that our cause is just, and that there is a Supreme Being who directs and overrules all." And again, "I hope you will be able to keep up your spirits, though I acknowledge in your situation the trial is severe; but it must be reconciled by a sense of duty, and confidence in that Supreme Being, who orders all things for the best. Our lot is cast in difficult and troubled times, in which our utmost fortitude is necessary; nor do I despair, if the country is ani-

mated with a suitable spirit; but if that fails, our case will be desperate indeed, as we have proceeded such lengths, that, unless we go further, we shall be branded most justly as the basest and meanest of mankind, nor shall I think any indignity or subjection too degrading for us. Instead of contesting about our settling forms of government, we must now oppose the common enemy with spirit and resolution, or all is lost."

At the time the British fleet, consisting of a large number of ships of war and transports, arrived in the harbor of New York, there prevailed in the American camp a painful sense of the great inadequacy of the troops then in camp, and a still more painful sense of uncertainty, as to the willingness and promptness of the people to furnish the necessary reënforcements. Expresses were immediately despatched in various directions, to hurry on the new levies. On this duty, too, Reed was sent into New Jersey by Washington, who wrote immediately after to Governor Livingston, "Since Colonel Reed left this place, I have received certain information from the Hook, that about forty of the enemy's fleet have arrived there, and others are now in sight, and that there cannot be a doubt but the whole fleet will be in this day and to-morrow. I beg not a moment's time may be lost in send-

ing forward such parts of the militia as Colonel Reed shall mention. We are so very weak at this post, that I must beg you to order the companies from Staten Island immediately to this city."

From the discharge of this special service, Reed, before returning to head-quarters at New York, went on to Amboy, to ascertain exactly the number of vessels that had arrived with the British fleet. Animated with the immediate prospect of active service on the arrival of the enemy, he writes to his wife, "Troops are coming in fast, and if they defer an attack any time, we shall have a number sufficient to cope with them. I think there can be little doubt but they will first land on Long Island. Every thing, I hope, will turn out right, and we shall again enjoy many happy days together." And a day or two later, he writes, "The summer is now pretty well wasted. If this army can be kept from penetrating into the country, or getting possession of this place, America is saved."

It was a few days later that Lord Howe arrived as a special commissioner, charged with a plan of reconciliation; just at the time, however, that Congress had taken the decisive step of declaring independence. The high character of the Admiral for ability and integrity, his political opinions on American affairs, and his re-

cent friendly intercourse with Dr. Franklin in England, made the question of conference with him one of considerable interest. Immediately on his arrival in America, a letter, of which he was the bearer, was brought unopened to Colonel Reed at head-quarters. It was from his brother-in-law, Mr. De Berdt, who wrote with the hope of contributing to an accommodation between the two countries, by impressing upon Reed's mind a just opinion of Lord Howe's character, estimable alike in private and public life, and in all respects admirably qualified to conduct with good feeling, as well as wisdom, his difficult commission, and still more to satisfy him that the embassy would be conducted in a conciliatory spirit.

"As I had reason," wrote Mr. De Berdt, "to believe Lord Howe had expressed the most anxious solicitude to bring about an accommodation without bloodshed, and to draw the sword with the greatest reluctance, and that these expressions were not only the language of his lips, but the dictate of his heart, I had a great desire to be introduced to him, and this day I had the honor of a conference, when his Lordship's conversation not only confirmed the report, but his friendly disposition towards America, and assurances of his inclination to effect a reconciliation without force, far exceeded my expectation; and

though the assurances of great men are frequently without meaning or intention, I have the strongest belief in what he said, and the greatest faith in his peaceful intentions. Do, my dear friend, let me persuade you, that Lord Howe goes to America as a mediator, and not as a destroyer.

"I firmly believe it, upon my honor. Were it prudent in me to reveal all he said, I would most cheerfully and readily do it. I quote not his Lordship's authority for what I say, but give you my opinion, on a well grounded belief of what I advance. This he has declared, he had rather meet you, and that immediately on his arrival, in the wide field of argument, than on the chosen ground for battle; and I am confident a parley on the footing of gentlemen and friends is his wish and desire; and it is generally believed, with his disposition to treat, he has power to compromise and adjust; nor do I think, if a conference should be brought about, anything unbecoming a gentleman will be desired, or unreasonable concessions expected. These things believed, I could not be happy in my own mind without communicating them to you, and Lord Howe has promised to take charge of this letter. I beg, therefore, to recommend them to your most serious consideration.

" My Lord Howe is not unacquainted with

your name. I have so high an opinion of your abilities and honor, and have had such repeated instances of your friendship and affection, that everything has been said by me that you can desire or expect; and I have not a doubt, if a treaty or parley is brought about, in which you may be engaged, every degree of respect you can desire, or attention you can wish, will be shown to you."

Immediately on receiving this letter, Mr. Reed thought it his duty to communicate it to Congress, and for this purpose enclosed a copy of it to Robert Morris, one of the delegates from Pennsylvania. A long letter from Mr. Morris in reply, which has never been published, is full of historical interest, especially as coming from a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and only about two weeks after that measure. He advocates earnestly, both the propriety and policy of hearing the propositions, which the commissioners had to offer.

"If," said he, "the Admiral and General are really desirous of a conference, I think and hope they will address our General properly. This may be expected, if they have powers beyond granting pardons; if they have not, it is idle for them to solicit any intercourse, as no good can possibly arise to them or their cause from it; but on our part, I think that good policy requires that we

should hear all they have to say. I am not for making any sacrifice of dignity ; but still, I would hear them, if possible, because, if they can offer peace on admissible terms, I believe the great majority of America would still be for accepting it. If they can only offer *pardons*, and that is fully ascertained, it will firmly unite all America in their exertions to support the independency they have declared ; and it must be obvious to every body, that our *united* efforts will be absolutely necessary. This being the case, why should we fear to treat of peace, or to hear the commissioners on that subject ? If they can offer terms that are advantageous and honorable for this country, let us meet them. If they cannot; we are not in a situation or temper to ask or receive pardons, and all, who do not mean to stoop to this ignominious submission, will consequently take up their arms with a determination to conquer or to die."

These opinions of Robert Morris corresponded with those which were entertained on the subject by Reed, who, the day after receiving the letter which Lord Howe had brought for him, in writing to his wife, remarked, "I do not see any inconvenience or danger in a conference of proper persons to know Lord Howe's powers and propositions of peace. If negotiation would not tend to slacken our preparations, I would wish

to know the extent of those powers, which he says are so great. I think, if only granting pardons is meant, and no concession on the point of taxation, it would unite all to perseverance and resolution, trusting the event to Providence." Again, writing to a kinsman, he says, "If the spirit of the people be what I hope it is, some good may arise from knowing the full extent of the powers of the commissioners, that all pretext and excuse may be wholly removed ; for nothing more enfeebles the mind, than that suspense which leaves it doubtful whether it will be called on to act or not." In another private letter he writes, "I think a specification of the powers of the commission, if obtained, would show that nothing but simple unconditional submission will do. This would silence all opposers of the public measures, and, in my opinion, animate our own men ; seeing every other hope gone, they would rely upon their own strength, and no enemy is so dreadful as a desperate one."

With his opportunities of accurately knowing the strength and condition of the American army, Reed could not but be conscious of the very unequal conflict they were about to venture upon against superior numbers and discipline ; but, with a painful conviction of this, he was not led to foster any hope of a satisfactory result of the

commission. He thought the parties too wide apart to allow the most distant expectation of successful negotiation, and, as to Lord Howe's powers, he did not believe he had authority to concede anything. It was to the British Adjutant-General, on the occasion of his interview, that Colonel Reed observed, that uniting the civil and military powers in the same person, as they were in Lord Howe, looked as if conquest, rather than peace and reconciliation, was intended.

On the 14th of July, a flag of truce from the British fleet appeared, which the Adjutant-General was ordered to go down and meet, in company with Colonel Webb, one of General Washington's aids. About half way between Governor's Island and Staten Island, the boats containing the American officers and the bearer of the flag of truce met, when an interview took place, which is thus described in a letter from Reed to his wife.

"After I had written my letter to you, a flag came in from Lord Howe. The general officers advised the General not to receive any letter directed to him as a private gentleman. I was sent down to meet the flag. A gentleman, an officer of the navy, met us, and said he had a letter from Lord Howe to Mr. Washington. I

told him we knew no such person in the army. He then took out a letter directed to George Washington, Esquire, and offered it to me. I told him I could not receive a letter to the General under such a direction. Upon which, he expressed much concern; said the letter was rather of a civil than military nature; that Lord Howe regretted he had not come sooner; that he had great powers, and it was much to be wished the letter could be received. I told him I could not receive it consistently with my duty. Here we parted. After he had got some distance, he put about, and we again met him. He then asked me under what title General, but, catching himself, Mr. Washington, chose to be addressed. I told him the General's station in the army was well known; that they could be at no loss; that this matter had been discussed last summer, of which I supposed the Admiral could not be ignorant. He then expressed his sorrow at the disappointment, and here we parted. I cannot help thinking but that we shall have a renewal of it to-day, or a communication of the business in some other way. For, though I have no hopes that the letter contains any terms to which we can accede, or, in short, is anything more than a summons of submission, yet the curiosity of the people is so great, and, if it is, as may be sup-

posed, couched in strong and debasing terms, it would animate the army exceedingly to do their duty."

A few days after, a flag again appeared, when the same officers went down, and were met by an aid of Lord Howe's, who said, that as there appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle between the two Generals, by way of correspondence, Lord Howe desired his Adjutant-General might be admitted to an interview with his Excellency General Washington, on which Colonel Reed, in the name of General Washington, consented, and pledged his honor for his being safe returned. The next day was appointed for the interview, when Colonel Paterson, the Adjutant-General of the British forces, was met and escorted to Knox's quarters, where the conference was held with General Washington. It lasted about an hour. Reed was present, and immediately after the conference was concluded, prepared, at Washington's suggestion, notes of what had passed on both sides. The original notes differ only in a few unimportant particulars from the revised account, which was communicated to Congress, and is a well known historical document. At the conclusion of the interview, Colonel Paterson was invited to partake of a collation, and was introduced to the general officers, who came forward when he was about to retire. He made strong acknowl-

edgments that the ceremony of blindfolding him, usual on similar occasions, had been dispensed with, and was escorted back to his own barge. In the official despatch from Lord Howe to Lord George Germain, the interview was, it appears, pithily described as "more polite than interesting."

During the months of July and August, the reënforcements of the British army continued to arrive, and with them the Hessian mercenaries, while, on the other hand, the officers in the American service appear scarcely to have indulged a conjecture as to the future that was hanging so doubtfully over them. Great as was the disparity of the two armies, and ill prepared, in many respects, as was the American force for the conflict, Reed's letters home show that the thought of anticipating an attack was occasionally entertained. He mentions, that an attack upon Staten Island was seriously thought of; but when it came to be executed, it was found there were neither men nor boats enough, and that the additional fortifications erected by the enemy would prevent such a plan from being resumed. He writes to his wife,

"It seems likely that it will be some time before any thing of consequence takes place. If our troops would come in, as they should do, some stroke might be made upon the enemy

before they collect their whole force. This is what we much wish, but have not strength sufficient. As to seeing you before the summer is over, I do not allow myself to think of it. When the path of duty is plain, one must pursue it, leaving the event to Providence. A second parting, under the prospects we now have, would be very distressing to us both, and would renew those gloomy sensations which I have not been able wholly to conquer. I trust we shall have a happy meeting in the fall, which will be infinitely better than a painful interview of a few hours now."

On the important military question of the propriety of attempting to keep possession of the city of New York, the Adjutant-General appears early to have come to the conclusion, which at length was forced upon the minds of all. "I cannot see," he said, "the propriety of risking the fate of America and this army, as they seem to me to depend on the single cost of defending this spot of ground against a more numerous and much better provided army. At least, I think we should have a magazine of arms and ammunition as a reserve, in case it should be wanted; for now our whole stock is here, and if we should meet with any disaster, I do not know how we should repair it." With General Greene and others, who formed on the question a minority in the

military council of the Commander-in-chief, Reed was of opinion that the Island of New York should be evacuated, and the city burned, to prevent its affording winter quarters to the enemy. "We should make it," said he, "a war of posts, prolong, procrastinate, avoid any general action, or indeed any action, unless we have great advantages. If we can prevent their penetrating into the country, the possession of a small piece of ground, covered by their shipping, can be of little importance. If they do not strike a *coup-de-main* here, which I much apprehend, I should be for destroying the city and retiring, when we can defend it no longer. It is a mere point of honor, which keeps us here now; one great object, the communication of the North River, is over, and I confess I do not see the propriety of risking the fate of America, which will much depend on that of this army and its military stores, to defend the city."

During the month of August, before the battle of Long Island, the frequent and almost only intelligence which reached the American camp was of the arrival of the enemy's reënforcements, and the chief solicitude was to prevent the discouraging effects of soldiers returning home, and to hasten the arrival of fresh troops. The large increase of the British army appears not to have impaired Reed's confidence, or rather hopefulness,

of maintaining defensive operations with success. On the 7th of August he writes to his wife, "The enemy have received a reënforcement of a hundred sail within these ten days; they make a very formidable appearance. When I consider the force and preparations against us, I cannot but admire the spirit of the country and the inequality of the contest. The whole world seems leagued against us. Enemies on every side, and no new friends, arise; but our cause is just, and there is a Providence which directs and governs all things. The late movement of the enemy is intended as a decisive one, and will prove so to this army, if it is not baffled by the vigilance or defeated by the bravery of our troops. In either case, we shall still be able to support the contest, if the spirits of the people are not depressed by the unprosperous state of our affairs. We hear strange reports on this subject; but surely it must equal the most sanguine wishes of any person, to keep this great army at bay the whole summer, and prevent their overrunning the country."

In a letter written a few days later, there occurs a touching trait of domestic affection, which may be cited, from a correspondence of the most familiar and confidential kind, as illustrating how much of manly gentleness of disposition was united with the energy and perhaps

impetuosity of character, which distinguished the writer in his public career.

"While our correspondence is yet open," he writes to Mrs. Reed, "I shall improve it; as writing to you, my dearest wife, constitutes my greatest pleasure next to hearing from you. Besides, the uncertainty how long it may continue is another motive to enjoy it as fully as I can. I never felt more painful sensations, than when I waked this morning from a most pleasing dream of peace and domestic happiness to a recollection of our present state, in which we have so much to apprehend; for upon the fate of this army, I take it, that of the country very much depends. Providence has cast our lot in a most unhappy period, but it is our duty to submit with patience to its dispensations, which, however dark and gloomy they appear to us shortsighted mortals, are designed for wise and great purposes. Under this confidence let us rest, trusting in His goodness who orders all things for the best, and humbly depending on him for strength to support and enable us to discharge our several duties with honor and fidelity."

## CHAPTER V...

*Landing of the British Army on Long Island. — Battle of Long Island. — Retreat from Brooklyn. — Washington's Description of his Army. — Reed's Letters.*

THE weary and anxious uncertainty, that had prevailed in the American camp, as to the beginning of actual hostilities in this campaign, was put an end to by the intelligence that General Howe had landed a large body of troops at Gravesend, on Long Island, on the 22d of August. The day before, Washington had received information that such a movement was contemplated, and that a simultaneous attack would be made, by the army and fleet, both upon the works that had been raised on Long Island and upon the city.

On the 23d, Colonel Reed writes home, " Yesterday, General Howe landed a body of troops on Long Island, the number from five to eight thousand. As there were so many landing places, and the people of the Island generally so treacherous, we never expected to prevent their landing; so that Colonel Hand,\* who was sta-

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\* Edward Hand, one of the most gallant and meritorious officers of the revolution. In the early part of 1776, he

tioned nearest the landing place, moved up immediately. By our last accounts, they were about five miles from the ferry, and about three from our works on the Island. All the deserters say an attack will also be made here very soon; but we see no preparation. The greatest vigilance is had to prevent a surprise, which we have to fear more than anything. About five thousand Connecticut militia have just come in, and more are arriving."

Again, on the next day, "Since yesterday, our troops have been skirmishing with the enemy on Long Island, with various fortune; but we have generally driven them back. Several were killed on both sides, but the numbers of ours not ascertained. Most of the Pennsylvania troops are ordered over. Our officers and men have behaved exceedingly well, and the whole army is in better spirits than I have known it at any time. The gallantry of the southern men has inspired all others, so that there will be an emulation who shall behave best. There is a wood between our works and the enemy's camp, of which each party is endeavoring to possess themselves; as yet we have kept it, and I hope we

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entered the service as Colonel of one of the Pennsylvania regiments, and served throughout the war with great distinction. He was afterwards Adjutant-General, and was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General.

shall, as it is very important. The enemy's ships are moving so much downwards, that we begin to think their grand attack will be on Long Island. Indeed, this place is now so strong, that, in the present temper of the men, the enemy would lose half their army in attempting to take it. While I am writing, there is a heavy firing, and clouds of smoke rising from the wood. General Putnam was made happy by obtaining leave to go over. The brave old man was quite miserable at being kept here."

The skirmishing in different parts of the Island, from Gravesend Bay to the lines at Brooklyn, continued with little intermission, and with considerable severity, from the 23d of August until the battle of the 27th. It was the first fighting in the open field that occurred during the war, and it was the first service of the southern troops; the Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland regiments behaving with great steadiness, and disputing the ground very bravely with the disciplined troops of the enemy; with what success, is best shown by the cautious manner with which the British General advanced in carrying into execution his plan of operations. On the 26th, it having, by that time, become evident that the engagement would take place on Long Island, Washington crossed over from New York to Brooklyn. The Adjutant-General accompanied

him, and remained there, on active duty, till they returned together to the city, when the retreat across the river was effected. On the following day, in the general engagement known as the battle of Long Island, Colonel Reed saw his first service in battle.

The action on Tuesday, the 27th of August, began before daybreak, by an attack upon the advance picket guard, consisting of a detachment of the Pennsylvania troops. A division of the American army, composed of part of Lord Sterling's brigade of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware regiments, immediately moved to the support of the guard, stationed near the enemy's left wing; and, soon after seven o'clock, that wing of the British army, commanded by General Grant, was discovered advancing, with their field artillery in front; and, at a distance of little more than two miles from the American lines at Brooklyn, the engagement became general. The reader is presumed to be acquainted with the events of the battle, and the disastrous issue. While its immediate influence was, however, to weaken the strength of the American army, and dishearten the soldiers, it afforded an example of admirable intrepidity and determination, in desperately disputing the ground, in open fight, with superior numbers and discipline. The action was fiercely fought till midday, when the

rout of the American troops that were engaged was complete, with severe loss in the killed and wounded, and a large number taken prisoners, among whom were General Sullivan, Lord Sterling, and several other officers of rank.

The three divisions of the British army were masters of the field, though not without heavy loss, and, towards the close of the day, had advanced to within a few hundred yards of the American redoubts at Brooklyn; the right wing of the enemy's army, under Sir Henry Clinton, advancing, at the same time, for the purpose of turning the left flank. The only alternative now left was to offer a determined front, and, calling in the troops in reserve on New York Island, to stake the fate of the whole army in an attempt to resist the British storming parties, if they should advance upon the works at Brooklyn. The British grenadiers had pressed on within musket-shot of the lines, and were so eager to attack the redoubts, that repeated orders were necessary to check them. General Howe, unwilling to expose his force to the loss, which might be sustained in an assault upon an enemy that had made the open field a bloody one for the victors, and was now intrenched within works that were pronounced, by the British engineers, "judiciously planned, but ill executed," determined to call off his troops from making the

assault, and content himself with getting possession of the lines more slowly, but at less cost, by regular approaches. Such was the position of the two armies on the night of the 27th.

On the 28th, Washington appears to have adhered to his intention of risking a battle at his lines. The day was one of most anxious and arduous preparation, occupied in bringing over from New York the regiments that formed the reserve, in strengthening the works, and rallying the strength and spirits of the troops that had been engaged the day before, and in watching the movements of the enemy, whose attack might be expected at any moment. The Adjutant-General was on duty without intermission during the whole day, riding from one point to another. He writes home, the next day, a hurried note, saying, "The enemy made no approach yesterday, except by a random fire; but our army has been kept up so long, and a most unfortunate rain yesterday has had a very injurious effect on their minds, bodies, and arms. However, we hope to be able to make a good stand, as our lines are pretty strong. They are intrenching at a small distance. Our situation is truly critical; but, with the blessing of Heaven, I hope we shall do well. My brother is well; I saw him in the lines last evening. God bless you and all about you. Do not be uneasy if I do not write

every day, as sometimes it may be impossible, and yet I may be well. General Parsons has got in, as well as many men missing since the battle on Tuesday; but it must be allowed to have been severe to us, and I believe as much so to the enemy, who have lost a great number both of officers and men. No account yet of Colonel Atlee or Major Byrd."

After this letter was written, Reed, in company with Mifflin, who had arrived in camp the day before, and Colonel William Grayson, of Virginia, one of Washington's aids, rode to the outposts, at the western extremity of the lines, in the neighborhood of Red Hook, where there was a small battery, which had suffered from the cannonade of one of the British ships during the action of the 27th. The rain was now succeeded by a fog so dense, that objects could not be discovered at a small distance; but a change of wind clearing the atmosphere, these officers were enabled to perceive the enemy's fleet lying at its anchorage off Staten Island, and a passing of boats to and from the admiral's ship, which seemed to indicate that some movement was preparing. This they conjectured was, if the wind should prove favorable, to bring the fleet up, on the change of the tide, and, after silencing the feeble batteries at Red Hook and New York, anchor in the East River, and thus, with the army, to

surround the American force, and cut off their retreat to the main land. The three officers immediately hastened to head-quarters ; and the communication of what they had observed is believed to have been the cause of a change of plans. A council of war was called, and a unanimous decision was formed to move the whole army across the ferry ; a retreat to the main land being now considered necessary at any hazard.

Among the reasons which appear in the minutes of the council, several are stated, which will also serve to show the difficulty of effecting the retreat, and the military skill which it required. There were needed, on the part of the officers, the prompt intrepidity and composure of veteran soldiers, in order to prevent the retreat becoming a scene of inextricable confusion, and ruinous to the cause. The minutes assign, as reasons for quitting Long Island, the "great confusion and discouragement among the troops, the damage to arms and ammunition by the heavy rains, and the exhaustion of the soldiers by service and exposure." About eight o'clock in the evening of the same day, (the 29th,) the regiments were silently paraded, and successively embarked during the night, with, however, considerable confusion at the ferry. Considering the uncertain discipline of the troops, the operations were

conducted with a regularity quite equal to what could have been expected. The enterprise was put in jeopardy by a mistaken order delivered by an acting aid, which prematurely, about two o'clock in the morning, brought the covering party, under the command of General Mifflin, away from their station.

The mistake was discovered and corrected by Washington in person ; and, although not only the advanced pickets and sentinels had been called in, but the whole command, which was to cover the retreat, was on its march to the ferry, their posts were resumed without the enemy perceiving what was going on at but a short distance. Washington, with his staff-officers and the Adjutant-General, were personally engaged in conducting the retreat, and crossed from Brooklyn only when the embarkation of the troops was accomplished. About daybreak, the first intelligence of the movement reached the enemy ; and, although the troops were immediately under arms and in pursuit, when the picket-guard crossed the crest of the works the American lines were found deserted. The advanced parties reached the river as the last boat load passed out of musket range. At six o'clock on the morning of the 30th of August, the American army, amounting to about nine thousand

men, were landed in New York, the heavy artillery having been abandoned to the enemy.

While the army was thus snatched almost from the grasp of a superior force, it was saved in a condition utterly dispirited by the events of the week; and, in Washington's melancholy despatch to Congress, he described his situation as truly distressing; a great proportion of the troops being filled with apprehension and despair, and the militia, dismayed, intractable, and impatient to leave camp, were going off almost by regiments. In describing the want of discipline, and the refusal of almost every kind of restraint and government, leading to a complete disregard of subordination, he says, "Till of late, I had no doubt in my own mind of defending this place, nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty; but this I despair of." This state of things is mentioned here, as serving to show the arduous duties which Reed was about to encounter as Adjutant-General.

On the same date with Washington's despatch, Reed writes to his wife, "I have only time to say I am alive and well; as to spirits, but middling. The justice of our cause, the hope of success, and every other circumstance that can enliven us, must be put into the scale against those of a contrary kind, which I allow to be

serious. I hope you will endeavor cheerfully to submit to the dispensations of Providence, whatever they may be. My honor, duty, and every other tie held sacred among men, call upon me to proceed with firmness and resolution; and I trust that neither you nor my children will have reason to be ashamed of my conduct. Walking in this path, I am sure I am right; and, having done this, the event must be left to the great Disposer of events. My country will, I trust, yet be free, whatever may be our fate who are cooped up, or are in danger of being so, on this tongue of land, where we ought never to have been."

It may help to give some notion of the sacrifice of domestic feeling, and the dutiful suppression of natural affection, which distinguished those times, and, at the same time, to illustrate Reed's character, to cite a passage from a letter, written at this period of the campaign, in reply to an urgent solicitation to make a brief visit to his family, on an occasion of illness.

He writes to his wife, "What shall I say to your request? Heaven is my witness, that so strong is my affection, and so powerful my wishes, that, were I to give way to them, all other considerations would vanish; but such a step would not only affect myself, but the public. If I, who have spoken so vehemently against officers and men running home in time of danger, should

myself do it, the example would have the most fatal consequences, and, I fear, make my whole future life uneasy. In so distressing a situation, I do not know what to say or determine. When I look round, and see how many have gone home whose situation, and family, and circumstances, would so much better have permitted them to remain, I cannot but think I have done more than I ought to have done. But I can truly say, I have acted solely on public views; and, let the issue of our contest be what it may, I cannot charge myself with having failed in any part of my duty at such a crisis."

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Landing of the British Advance Guard on New York Island.—Evacuation of New York.—Skirmish of the 17th September, 1776.—Death of Knowlton and of Leitch.—Condition of the Army.—Loss of Fort Washington, and Retreat into New Jersey.—Correspondence with Charles Lee, and Misunderstanding with Washington.*

THE dispirited condition of the army, and the distrust entertained of the soldiers by their offi-

cers, were deplorably heightened by the circumstances attending the final evacuation of New York, and the first landing of the British force at Kip's Bay at the same time. The brigades, which were to oppose the landing, broke into a precipitate and disorderly flight, without firing a shot, and, though with greatly superior numbers to the enemy, could not be formed again. It was witnessed by Washington himself with vehement indignation, and an angry disappointment, which, perhaps, on no other occasion in the course of the war did he experience in an equal degree. General Greene describes it as a miserable, disorderly flight of whole brigades before an insignificant number.

The downward tendency of things was however happily checked, soon after, by an exploit on the part of a detachment of a Connecticut and a Virginia regiment, led into action by two gallant officers, Knowlton and Leitch, who both fell mortally wounded in the skirmish. In this engagement, which had the happiest effect in reviving the spirit of the army and giving confidence to the troops, Reed had an active part, and his letter home gives a fresh and simple account of the affair.

As to the engagement of the 17th, (September,) he writes, "I happened to be in it when it began, and assisted in calling off our troops

when they had pursued the enemy as far as was thought proper. It hardly deserves the name of a battle; but as it was a scene so different from what had happened the day before, it elevated the spirits of our troops, and in that respect has been of great service. It would take up too much time and paper to go into a minute description of the whole affair. The substance of it is this. Just after I had sealed my letter to you and sent it away, an account came, that the enemy was advancing upon us in three large columns. We have so many false reports, that I desired the General to permit me to go and discover what truth there was in the account. I went down to our most advanced post, and, while talking with the officer of the guard, the enemy's advance guard fired upon us at about fifty yards' distance. Our men behaved well, stood and returned the fire, till, overpowered by numbers, they were obliged to retreat. The enemy advanced upon us very fast. I had not quitted the house five minutes, before they were in possession of it. Finding how things were, I went over to the General to get some support for the brave fellows who had behaved so well. By the time I got there, the enemy appeared in open view, and sounded their bugles in a most insulting manner, as is usual after a foxchase. I never felt such a sensation before ; it seemed to

crown our disgrace. The General was prevailed on to order out a party to attack them, and, as I had been on the ground, which no one else had, it fell to me to conduct them. They were Virginia troops, commanded by a brave officer, Major Leitch. I accordingly went with them, but was unhappily thwarted in my scheme by some persons calling to the troops, and taking them out of the way I intended.

"In a few minutes our brave fellows mounted up the rocks, and attacked the enemy with great spirit. At the same time, some of our troops in another quarter moved up towards the enemy, and the action began. Major Leitch fell near me in a few minutes, with three balls through him, but is likely to do well.\* Colonel Knowlton, a brave Connecticut officer, also fell mortally wounded. I mounted him on my horse, and brought him off. In about ten minutes, our people pressing on with great ardor, the enemy gave way, and left us the ground, which was strewed pretty thick with dead, chiefly the enemy, though it since turns out that our loss is also considerable. Our greatest loss is poor Knowlton, whose name and spirit ought to be immortal. I assisted him off, and, when gasping in the agonies of death, all his inquiry was

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\* Major Leitch's wounds proved mortal, and he died in a short time.

if we had driven in the enemy. The pursuit of a flying enemy was so new a scene, that it was with difficulty our men could be brought to retreat, which they did in very good order. We buried the dead, and brought off the wounded, on both sides, as far as our troops had pursued. We have since learned, that the main body of the enemy was hastily advancing, so that, in all probability, there would have been a reverse of things if the pursuit had not been given over. You can hardly conceive the change it has made in our army. The men have recovered their spirits, and feel a confidence, which before they had quite lost. I hope the effects will be lasting."

In this engagement, Colonel Reed had a horse shot under him, and narrowly escaped being shot by a runaway soldier, whom he attempted to drive back, and whose musket missed fire when deliberately levelled at him. In this skirmish, several officers of high rank were present, with the hope of putting the soldiers in better heart. Colonel Reed remarks, "I suppose many persons will think it was rash and imprudent in officers of our rank to go into such an action. General Putnam, General Greene, many of the General's family, Mr. Tilghman, and others, were in it; but it was really to animate the troops, who were quite dispirited, and would not go into danger, unless their officers led the way."

After the army took the field, on the evacuation of New York, Colonel Reed's letters home became more hurried and infrequent. His duties were incessant and harassing. This was occasioned partly by the position of the army, but incomparably more by the spirit of insubordination prevalent in camp, and the difficulty in restraining, by discipline and military justice, the perpetration of crimes. In his despatch to Congress, of the 24th of September, Washington refers to the desertions occurring by thirty and forty at a time, and to even a worse evil, "the infamous practice of plundering," and the burning of houses for the purpose of concealing the depredations; and in a private letter, alluding particularly to the appointment in the states of incompetent officers, he writes, "I am wearied to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I do solemnly protest, that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds would not induce me to undergo what I do."

The office of Adjutant-General, in an army vitiated with such materials, must have been at once a most onerous and thankless one. All Reed's strength of mind and body was devoted wholly to the faithful fulfilment of his duties, and, never absenting himself from his post during the campaign, he ceased not strenuously to apply all the personal activity and prompt ener-

gy of character, for which he was distinguished, to the establishment, if possible, of discipline and subordination. The fearlessness with which he resisted, and labored to check, abuses so numerous and so various, as to stand almost audaciously above the reach of authority, brought upon his services, as might have been expected, a large, though most unmerited share of odium. A strict disciplinarian was not likely to find favor under such circumstances, and a new difficulty made its appearance in the sectional feeling which began to be engendered in this campaign, especially in the want of harmony between the southern and the New England troops. It was an insinuation, rather than an open charge, against the Adjutant-General, that the adverse feeling to the eastern troops was encouraged by him; and, in the following year, the imputation was revived in Congress, to his injury for a short time, but not without affording him an opportunity of amply repelling it. The subject need not, at this point of his biography, be longer dwelt on, than to explain his determination respecting this office. It may, however, be added, that the injustice of the reproach is well refuted, by the simple fact, that one of the most valued friendships of Reed's life, and one which, like the friendship between Washington and himself, does honor to his memory, was that which was so

deeply confirmed, during their joint service in this campaign, between him and the most distinguished of the New England generals. The affectionate and confidential intimacy between Reed and Greene began at Cambridge, in 1775, and continued, without interruption, to the close of their lives.

In October, Colonel Reed writes home, "I have acquainted Congress with my intention to resign my office of Adjutant-General. Every succeeding circumstance has confirmed this sentiment, and I hope ere long to hear that my successor is appointed. If my personal services were of such weight in the scale as to make it preponderate, no consideration could make me quit the service; but as I am of opinion that some person may be found more skilled in military matters, and of more temper to bear the rubs and obstacles which ignorance and impudence are constantly throwing in my way, I think I may, with a safe conscience, resign it into other hands. To attempt to introduce discipline and subordination into a new army, must always be a work of much difficulty; but where the principles of democracy so universally prevail, where so great an equality, and so thorough a levelling spirit predominates, either no discipline can be established, or he who attempts it must become odious and detestable; a position which

no one will choose. It is impossible for any one to have an idea of the complete equality, which exists between the officers and men who compose the greater part of our troops. You may form some notion of it, when I tell you, that yesterday morning a captain of horse, who attends one of the generals, was seen shaving one of his men on the parade near the house. I have not yet any answer to my application, but expect it, as I have expressed myself of and to some people here with such freedom, after the affair of the 15th of last month, that I believe many of them wish me away."

When Colonel Reed entertained the wish of resigning the office of Adjutant-General, it was his intention to continue in camp, serving as a volunteer in connection with Washington's staff. The actual resignation was still postponed, until Congress should be prepared to choose his successor; and he remained in the energetic and patient discharge of the duties of the office during the remainder of the campaign in New York. In October, he appears to have been hopeful of a decisive and successful termination of the campaign, and to have been promptly averse to retirement from military life, though an honorable political station in civic life might have given him occasion for it. He writes to a friend in Philadelphia, "The enemy have taken post above

the main body of our army, keeping constantly in view the same object of surrounding us. We have now every advantage of ground; and, if the men will fight, I cannot but hope we shall foil them in any attempt they make. My own opinion is, that, if we cannot fight them here, we cannot do it anywhere. Every nerve should be strained to collect and forward provisions from Pennsylvania and New Jersey; for, if we can keep the enemy at bay but a little time, they must fight us under great disadvantage, or the season will drive them off. I was much surprised at your mentioning me as one proposed for Governor. I would not, on any account, consent to it, or anything of the kind. Pray do all you can to suppress any such measure."

It is not necessary, in this memoir, to dwell on the series of occurrences which disastrously closed the campaign in New York, or the military questions which were discussed with so much painful solicitude. Fort Washington, with the valuable troops which garrisoned it, was lost, and the American army, miserably reduced in numbers, began its retreat across New Jersey. Although the campaign was thought to be drawing to its close for the winter, Washington, finding his army dwindled down to three thousand men, lost no time in endeavoring to increase his army; and, with this view, when he reached

Newark, he despatched his Adjutant-General to Burlington, to use his influence with the legislature of New Jersey to raise more troops. This mission gave him, for the first time, an opportunity, while executing an order, to unite with the discharge of his duty the enjoyment of a hurried visit to his family, whom he had left in that place when he joined the army, and whom he now sent into the Pines of New Jersey, as a place of greater security for his wife and children, fleeing at the approach of the enemy. The domestic pleasure of this visit was more than counterbalanced by an occurrence, which was brought painfully to his knowledge on his return to head-quarters, and which, for a time, endangered the cordial and confidential intimacy that had grown up between Washington and himself.

The circumstances of the affair were briefly as follows. When the retreat into New Jersey had begun, Colonel Reed addressed a letter to General Charles Lee, whose military reputation, at that time, was highly respected, expressing an earnest desire for his presence at the military councils at head-quarters, and lamenting the suspense in which Washington had been kept by the conflicting opinions on the subject of Fort Washington. Reed had been very anxious for the evacuation of it; but other counsels prevailed, after much hesitation on the part of the Com-

mander-in-chief, and the fort and its garrison fell into the hands of the enemy. To Reed's letter, Lee replied in one that was every way characteristic of him, dilating, in his peremptory and extravagant style, upon what he called "the curse of military indecision ; that fatal indecision of mind, which is a greater disqualification than stupidity or cowardice." Lee's letter reached head-quarters during Reed's absence at Burlington, and was opened and read by Washington, who supposed that it was on public business. What had been the tone of the letter, which had called such a reply from Lee, he had no means of knowing ; but it was a natural inference, that it too was derogatory to his military character ; and thus, besides the mortification of learning the opinion entertained of him by an officer of Lee's high character for military judgment and experience, his feelings were deeply wounded by finding, as he could scarce help suspecting, his intimate and confidential friend, the Adjutant-General, sharing in a correspondence which was at variance with such friendship as had been mutually cherished by them. His admirable self-control and dignity did not, however, fail him, and he contented himself with enclosing Lee's letter to Colonel Reed, in a note of brief and cold courtesy, expressing his regret for having unawares opened and read a private letter, which neither

inclination nor intention would have prompted him to see.

The distress which this occasioned to Reed did not, however, precipitate an explanation on his part; but the course which he determined on, as at once the most satisfactory, and due to himself as well as Washington, was to obtain from Lee the letter itself, and, by a manly and candid exhibition of it, written, as it had been, with all the haste and freedom of the confidential expression of a strong feeling, to satisfy his friend that the letter was not such a one as Lee's wild answer naturally led him to suppose. This intention was frustrated by Lee's unexpected and unaccountable delay in bringing up the rear-guard of the army, and, in less than two weeks, his capture by the enemy. The incidents of the winter campaign of 1776-7 were of too absorbing a nature to allow any recurrence to matters of mere personal and private grievance; and it is honorable to the character of Washington and Reed, that, with this subject of personal dissatisfaction unexplained, their high sense of public duty prevented it from affecting, in the smallest degree, their relations so as to cause any embarrassment, or even inconvenience, to the service. At no period did Reed devote himself more earnestly to the support of the Commander-in-chief; and it was during the continuance of this partial

personal alienation that Washington rendered, as it will be seen, a public and substantial tribute to Reed's services and military ability, of the most gratifying kind that could be paid to a companion in arms.

After the winter campaign was over, Reed did not relinquish the hope of recovering the letter from Lee, who was still a prisoner of war; but, as this hope was diminished by the uncertainty of his release, explanation was no longer delayed. When it was given, what success he had in the difficult work of regaining a friendship lost, at least in part, will best be seen from Washington's answer.

On the 14th of June, 1777, he writes, "I could not resist the inclination of detaining Mr. Peters long enough to write you a short letter, to thank you, as I do most sincerely, for the friendly and affectionate sentiments contained in yours of the 4th towards me, and to assure you, that I am perfectly convinced of the sincerity of them. True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter, which appeared, at that time, to be the echo of one from you. I was hurt, not because I thought my judgment wronged by the expressions contained in it, but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favorable manner in which your opinions,

upon all occasions, had been received, the impression they made, and the unreserved manner in which I wished and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with anything, then, that carried with it a complexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuousness, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to. I sincerely wish that you may accept the appointment of Congress, and the post I am desirous of placing you in, and must beg to be favored with an answer immediately upon the subject, as the service will not admit of delay. A general officer in that department would not only take off a great deal of trouble from me, but be a means of bringing those regiments into order and service with much more facility than it is in my power, divided as my attention is, possibly to do. Mr. Peters's waiting obliges me to conclude, and I do it with great truth, dear Sir, your obedient and affectionate servant."

From this moment, such was the influence of frank and manly explanations, all distrust and estrangement were done away with, and the re-

lations of former friendly and affectionate confidence happily restored.\* This result of a transient difficulty has an especial interest in this memoir, as securing to the memory of Reed the honor of Washington's well-earned and sustained friendship; and it also serves to illustrate some of the fine, unnoticed traits of that matchless character. At a later period, he wrote to Reed an elaborate letter on the subject of the loss of Fort Washington; and it is referred to here, not so much for the purpose of establishing the reasonableness and truth of the strong feeling with which Reed, in his letter to Lee, lamented the causes of the loss of the fort and its garrison, as to show the admirable candor with which Washington acknowledges the unwonted perplexity of his mind on that occasion, and the consequences of it; in his own words, "that warfare in my mind, and hesitation, which ended in the loss of the garrison."

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\* The whole of the correspondence has been published by Mr. Sparks, in an Appendix to the fourth volume of "The Life and Writings of Washington."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Military Operations in New Jersey.—Reed's Letter of the 22d December.—Washington's of the 23d.—Attempt to cross the Delaware at Dunks's Ferry.—Battle of Trenton.—Passage of the Delaware above Bristol.—Reed goes to Trenton.—Capture of the British Chasseurs near Princeton.—Battle of Princeton.—Reed's Letter to Putnam.*

WHEN Reed was despatched to Burlington for the special purpose stated in the last chapter, it was thought, that the campaign of 1776 was about to be finished by the British army making their advanced quarters at Brunswick, and the American army theirs at Trenton or Princeton. Under this impression, he thought that the time had arrived when he might with propriety carry into effect his wish of resigning his commission as Adjutant-General. At Burlington, on the 1st of December, he enclosed it in a letter to the President of Congress. But at midnight of the same day he received a message from Washington, that the enemy, encouraged by the broken state of the American troops, had changed their plan, and were rapidly advancing towards the Delaware; upon which intelligence he in-

stantly sent a special messenger to recall the resignation. The messenger reached Philadelphia in time, before Congress was in session, and returned with the commission, with which Reed rejoined Washington the next morning at Trenton. When, several months before, a movement of the British force during the campaign in New York had given rise to a report, that they were about to move towards Philadelphia through New Jersey, Reed wrote to his wife, "My heart melts within me at the thought of having that fine country desolated, for it is of little consequence which army passes. It is equally destructive to friend and foe; and when I consider your exposed situation, I feel peculiar anxiety." With the natural regret at the prospect of these apprehensions being fulfilled, there came however this compensation, that, if a section of country endeared to him from childhood was about to suffer the miseries that war brings with it, his minute familiarity with the ground, that was to be the scene of hostilities, might enable him to render services of peculiar value.

On the 8th of December, Washington, having pushed his retreat by crossing the Delaware at Trenton, and having taken post on the western bank, sent Reed to Philadelphia as bearer of a letter to Congress, urging the speedy sending on of reënforcements. This appeal brought out a

considerable body of the Pennsylvania militia and volunteers, the greater part of whom were posted about ten miles below Trenton, on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, at Bristol, and were, together with a detachment of the Rhode Island troops, placed under the command of General Cadwalader. This position was taken to oppose any movement of the force under Count Donop, extending down as far as Bordentown and the Black Horse. As soon as the militia were collected, and posted at Bristol, the Adjutant-General was sent by Washington to join their commanding officer.

The first intimation of the plan of any offensive movement, such as shortly after successfully changed the character of the campaign, may be traced in Washington's letters of the 14th of December; but the intelligence which a day or two later reached him of Lee's capture, and other information, as well as the delay in the arrival of the reënforcements from the north, probably induced him to lay the plan aside. On the 18th he writes to his brother, "I think, if something more be not done, the game is nearly up." A letter from General Greene, dated the 21st, shows however that the hope was not given up, of striking a blow at some part of the enemy's force. The extreme uncertainty that hung over the plan, is nevertheless apparent from a letter

written by Washington to Robert Morris the next day, December 22d, dated at "Camp above the Falls at Trenton." In this letter he recommends that no arms, or valuable stores, or important papers, should be kept in Philadelphia; "for," he observes, "sorry I am to inform you, my dear Sir, that, unless the militia repair to the city for defence of it, I see no earthly prospect of saving it after the last of this instant;" and again, "I am satisfied the enemy wait for two events only to begin their operations upon Philadelphia, ice for a passage, and the dissolution of the poor remains of our debilitated army." It would not be just to infer, from this letter, that Washington had absolutely relinquished the thought of a movement, such as he had been contemplating a short time before; but there was manifold and serious discouragement for the attempt. It was doubtless still the subject of anxious consideration with him, and of discussion among his officers. Between General Mercer and the Adjutant-General, two or more conversations took place about this time, in which the question was discussed as to the propriety and practicability of an attempt to carry some of the isolated posts of the enemy on the east side of the river. Agreeing decidedly upon it, they determined to recommend it to the Commander-

in-chief and the general officers, who would form his council.

On the 22d of December, the date of the letter to Morris, Reed, who was actively engaged in obtaining intelligence of the movements and force of the enemy, wrote from Bristol a letter to Washington, in which, after detailing a good deal of minute intelligence, that had been brought in from the country occupied by the enemy, he proceeded to those parts of the letter, which possess the double interest of showing that the officers at Bristol had planned a separate attack on the Hessians below, independently of coöperation against the force at Trenton, and that Reed was an early and earnest advocate of vigorous operations offensively at that gloomy period of the war. He writes,

"Colonel Griffin has advanced up the Jerseys, with six hundred men, as far as Mount Holly, within seven miles of the enemy's head-quarters at the Black Horse. He has written over here for two pieces of artillery and two or three hundred volunteers, as he expected an attack very soon. The spirits of the militia here are very high; they are all for supporting him. Colonel Cadwalader and the gentlemen here all agree that they should be indulged. We can either give him a strong reënforcement, or make

a separate attack ; the latter bids fairest for producing the greatest and best effects. It is therefore determined to make all possible preparation to-day ; and, no event happening to change our measures, the main body here will cross the river to-morrow morning, and attack their post between this and the Black Horse, proceeding from thence either to the Black Horse or the Square, where about two hundred men are posted, as things shall turn out with Griffin. If they should not attack Griffin as he expects, it is probable both our parties may advance to the Black Horse, should success attend the intermediate attempt. If they should collect their force, and march against Griffin, our attack will have the best effects in preventing their sending troops on that errand, or breaking up their quarters and coming in upon their rear, which we must endeavor to do in order to free Griffin.

" We are all of opinion, my dear General, that something must be attempted to revive our expiring credit, give our cause some degree of reputation, and prevent a total depreciation of the Continental money, which is coming on very fast; that even a failure cannot be more fatal than to remain in our present situation ; in short, some enterprise must be undertaken in our present circumstances, or we must give up the cause. In a little time the Continental army will be dis-

solved. The militia must be taken before their spirits and patience are exhausted ; and the scattered, divided state of the enemy affords us a fair opportunity of trying what our men will do, when called to an offensive attack. Will it not be possible, my dear General, for your troops, or such part of them as can act with advantage, to make a diversion, or something more, at or about Trenton ? The greater the alarm, the more likely will success attend the attacks. If we could possess ourselves again of New Jersey, or any considerable part of it, the effects would be greater than if we had never left it.

"Allow me to hope that you will consult your own good judgment and spirit, and not let the goodness of your heart subject you to the influence of opinions from men in every respect your inferiors. Something must be attempted before the sixty days expire, which the commissioners have allowed ; for, however many affect to despise it, it is evident that a very serious attention is paid to it, and I am confident that, unless some more favorable appearance attends our arms and cause before that time, a very great number of the militia officers here will follow the example of those of Jersey, and take benefit from it. I will not disguise my own sentiments, that our cause is desperate and hopeless, if we do not take the opportunity of the

collection of troops at present, to strike some stroke. Our affairs are hastening to ruin, if we do not retrieve them by some happy event. Delay, with us, is now equal to a total defeat. Be not deceived, my dear General, with small flattering appearances; we must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into security and inaction, because the enemy does not cross the river. It is but a reprieve; the execution is the more certain; for I am very clear that they can and will cross the river in spite of any opposition we can give them.

“ Pardon the freedom I have used. The love of my country, a wife and four children in the enemy’s hands, the respect and attachment I have to you, the ruin and poverty that must attend me and thousands of others, will plead my excuse for so much freedom. I am, with the greatest respect and regard, dear Sir, your obedient and affectionate humble servant.”\*

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\* The advanced guard of the Hessians, under Donop, had at this time approached that part of Jersey, into which, for security, he had sent his wife with their young children, and the family was thus exposed, in the case of a successful advance, beyond the reach of assistance or defence. A coincidence may be noticed between the language of Colonel Reed’s letter and that used by Washington, in a letter dated only two days earlier, (Dec. 20th,) addressed by him to Congress, and giving his advice with freedom. “ A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse.”

'This letter reached Washington in a few hours, and, in the course of the same day, he sent for Reed to head-quarters, and communicated to him the outlines of his plan of attack on Trenton, and earnestly urged, that, in the mean time, the enemy's posts, lower down, might be kept in alarm, or, if possible, an actual attack made, as had been already proposed. The Adjutant-General then returned to Bristol, and, after conference with General Cadwalader, crossed the river under cover of night, with Colonel John Cox, and proceeded to the quarters of Colonel Griffin, at Mount Holly. They found that officer sick, and his command in such condition, in respect to numbers and equipment, as to put an end to all hope of effective coöperation. With this disappointment they returned, reached Bristol at midnight, and communicated the intelligence to Washington. The next day, Griffin was dislodged by Donop's advance.

The following letter, addressed to "Joseph Reed, Esq., or, in his absence, to John Cadwalader, Esq. only, at Bristol," was received on the day of its date.

"Camp above Trenton Falls,  
23d December, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,

"The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last

night, and if not, to inform you that Christmas day, at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us, our numbers, sorry am I to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay, must justify any attempt. Prepare, and, in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can with a prospect of success. The more we attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread, and greater good will result from it.

"If I had not been fully convinced, before, of the enemy's designs, I have now ample testimony of their intentions to attack Philadelphia so soon as the ice will afford the means of conveyance. As the colonels of the Continental regiments might kick up some dust about command, unless Cadwalader is considered by them in the light of a brigadier, which I wish him to be, I desire General Gates, who is unwell, and has applied for leave to go to Philadelphia, to endeavor, if his health would permit, to call and stay two or three days at Bristol in his way. I shall not be particular; we could not ripen matters for our attack before the time mentioned in the first part of this letter, so much out of sorts, and so much in want of everything, are the troops under Sullivan. Let

me know by a careful express the plan you are to pursue. The letter herewith sent, forward on to Philadelphia. I could wish it to be there in time for the southern post's departure, which will be, I believe, by eleven o'clock to-morrow.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“GEORGE WASHINGTON.

“P. S. I have ordered our men to be provided with three days' provisions, ready cooked, with which, and their blankets, they are to march; for, if we are successful, which Heaven grant, and the circumstances favor, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded, and not a soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with the permit. Do the same with you.”

The importance which Washington manifestly attached to a simultaneous attack on the lower posts now rendered it more necessary than ever to attempt to supply the disappointment as to Griffin's detachment. It was determined that an effort should be made to induce General Putnam to cross the river at Philadelphia, and move up against the enemy with such troops as he had, while the Philadelphia militia, and the rest of the force at Bristol, should cross there. But the difficulty presented itself in effecting this without

endangering the secret, to obviate which, Colonel Reed went down to the city. After spending some hours, and finding that Putnam was unable, from various causes, to accomplish the desired object, he returned to Bristol in the evening of the 25th, where he found the troops paraded to make the movement, which was not dependent upon coöperation of the force in Philadelphia, however desirable that would have been. To prevent intelligence reaching the enemy, the march was to be made under cover of night, and by a circuitous route by a ferry four miles lower down the river, from which the approach to Mount Holly would be as direct, and through a more uninhabited country.

The weather of that night proved severe and stormy ; and, after two battalions were landed upon the Jersey shore, the storm of hail and snow increased so much, and the ice drifted with such force, as to threaten the boats with destruction, and to render the passage difficult, if not impossible, for the troops and artillery. The accumulation of ice upon the shore made it scarcely practicable to land horses and cannon. Colonel Reed, with some of the officers, crossed, to ascertain whether it could be attempted, and, after the most vigorous exertions, it was found necessary to abandon the enterprise, and to re-pass the advanced parties, without alarming the

enemy. This being done, the troops were reluctantly marched back to Bristol. The Adjutant-General, with one of the officers who had remained till the troops were embarked on their return, finding it impossible to recross with their horses, proceeded to Burlington, where they remained during the rest of the night, and in the morning crossed over to Bristol.

The sound of the firing at Trenton announced that the engagement had taken place as planned, and when the rumors of its success reached Bristol on the same day, a plan was formed to make a second attempt to cross the river and attack some of the enemy's posts, though it was not then known what Washington's movement would be after the surprise of the Hessians was achieved. This was carried into effect on the morning of the 27th, at a ferry, about two miles above Bristol; but after a part of the troops had been embarked, and landed on the Jersey shore, a precise account of the success at Trenton was received, accompanied, however, with the important intelligence, that Washington had recrossed the Delaware with his army and prisoners, and resumed his former cantonments on the Pennsylvania side of the river. This at once presented a new and perplexing question, which was warmly and earnestly discussed. It was contended, by those who were in favor of

returning, that one object of the movement, in coöperating with the main body of the army, had ceased; that Count Donop was equal, if not superior, in numbers, and might march back from Mount Holly, and that a retreat might be cut off. Colonel Hitchcock, who was in command of the New England regiments, was strongly of this opinion, strengthened by the unprovided condition of his troops. Such too was the opinion of the commanding officer, General Cadwalader, who thought it most prudent to retreat, but appears to have yielded his own opinion to that of the Adjutant-General. The retreat was warmly opposed by Colonel Reed, and the officers who concurred with him, because the disappointment would have a bad effect upon the soldiers, who had been before called out and withdrawn.

To put an end to the uncertainty of the consultation, and to prevent the retreat being determined on, Reed proposed that the embarkation should be completed, and the troops marched to Burlington. This, however, occasioned a doubt, arising from an apprehension, that, as the landing had been made in open day, the enemy might collect their force against them at Burlington; but the march to that place was determined on, in consequence of intelligence being received that Donop had left the Black Horse and Mount

Holly. Just as orders to this effect were given, an account was brought in, that a party of the enemy had been seen apparently lying in wait in a wood. Doubting the truth of the information, and anxious to prevent the abandonment of the plan of march just determined on, the Adjutant-General, with two officers, who, like himself, had familiar local knowledge of that part of the country, reconnoitred the woods, and found the report groundless; upon which, the troops under command of General Cadwalader proceeded to Burlington.

Colonel Reed, with his companions, rode on towards the enemy's outposts, and, halting at some distance from the place where the picket-guard usually was posted, and seeing no smoke or appearance of men, advanced and found it abandoned. Upon questioning the neighbors, and being informed by them that, on hearing of the surprise at Trenton, Count Donop immediately began his retreat in the utmost panic, calling in his guards as he proceeded, Reed advanced to Bordentown, which he found evacuated in the same manner; and, from that place, one of the officers returned to Burlington, to inform Cadwalader of the enemy's retreat: On the road it was observed, that almost every house had a red rag nailed upon the door, which the inhabitants, on the reverse of affairs, were busily

pulling off. Reed continued his ride during the night, with his companion, Colonel Cox, towards Trenton, which they reached about two o'clock in the morning of the 28th. They found the town evacuated, with not a single soldier of either side there, and in a wretched condition from distress and plunder.

The Adjutant-General despatched, by express, a hurried letter to Washington, informing him of the state of things, of the progress of Cadwalader's division, and urging him to recross the river again and pursue their advantages, representing particularly the prospect of overtaking the force under Donop. Washington's reply was received early the next morning, with the information that orders for recrossing were given. Two advance parties marched into Trenton on that day, with instructions to the officers to act under the orders of the Adjutant-General, and were at once sent in pursuit of Donop, to harass his retreat, and, if possible, detain him till the other troops came up.

On the 30th, Washington crossed the river, and his whole force took possession of Trenton. At this time, there being great uncertainty as to the position and movements of the enemy, Washington directed the Adjutant-General, who was well acquainted with the country around his native place, and with the inhabitants, to recon-

noitre the advance posts of the British army and gain intelligence. Reed immediately set out, accompanied by six gentlemen, members of the Philadelphia City Troop, whose names deserve to be remembered for the boldness and gallantry of the affair which followed; they were John Dunlap, James Hunter, Thomas Peters, William Pollard, and James and Samuel Caldwell. The party went in the direction of Princeton, where a considerable force of the enemy was posted, but met with little success, the ravages of the enemy having struck such terror that no rewards would tempt the people to go into Princeton on the errand of obtaining intelligence. It being resolved, however, not to return while there was a chance of success, it was concluded to pass, and even to go round Princeton, expecting to find the enemy less guarded on their rear.

As the party was moving on at a distance from Princeton, near enough to have a view of the tops of the college building, a British soldier was observed passing without arms from a barn to a farm-house. Being supposed to be a marauder, two of the party were ordered to bring him in; but they had scarcely set out, before another was seen, and then a third, when the order was given for the whole party to charge. This was done, and twelve dragoons, well armed, with their pieces loaded, and having the advantage

of the house, surrendered to seven horsemen, six of whom had never seen an enemy before, and, almost in sight of the British army, were carried off, and brought prisoners into the American camp at Trenton, on the same evening.\* Besides the dragoons, whose sergeant alone escaped into Princeton, with intelligence of the surprise, a commissary was taken, and the important intelligence gained, that Lord Cornwallis, the day before, with a body of picked troops, had reënforced General Grant, at Princeton, and they were preparing to march the next day to dislodge Washington from Trenton, the whole British force being not less than seven or eight thousand men.

This intelligence rendered it important to strengthen the main body of the army by a junction of the two divisions, which was effected at Trenton, on the 2d of January, 1777. The

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\* The Philadelphia City Troop, of which the gentlemen who distinguished themselves on this occasion were members, has preserved its organization to the present day; and, as a record of their revolutionary services, it is interesting to add an extract of a letter written by Colonel Reed at the close of the campaign of 1776. "The light-horse, though few in number, have rendered as essential service as, in my opinion, the same number of men ever performed to their country in the same time. They thought no duty beneath them, and went through it with a generous disregard of fatigue and danger, that entitles them to the kindest notice and attention of their fellow-citizens."

question then occurred as to occupying the advantageous ground on the east side of the Assanpink, a creek which runs through the town, and over which is a narrow bridge, the water, for some distance up, not being fordable. The familiarity with this part of the country, gained by Reed during the early years of his life, was now to serve an important purpose ; and, before any plan was decided on, he suggested to Washington, that, if the enemy should divert them in front, and, at the same time, throw a body of troops over the Assanpink, a few miles up, where there were several fords, the American army would be completely enclosed, with the Delaware in their rear, over which there would be neither time nor means of crossing.

This suggestion was thought so important, that the Adjutant-General was ordered to proceed, with all possible speed, to ascertain the condition of the fords. This was immediately done by Colonel Reed, accompanied by a few of the Philadelphia light-horse. The nearest ford, at a distance from Trenton of two miles, was found scarcely passable for horses, the water being high and rapid ; but, a mile higher up, one was found in good fordable condition ; and, if the enemy had taken the opportunity of passing it, the position of the American army might have become desperate.

Washington, having drawn in his guards, occupied the ground on the east side of the As-sanpink, the enemy, at the same time, pressing on, and taking possession of the other side of the creek on the 2d of January. The position of the American army was with a creek in their front, easily fordable a few miles higher up, and with the Delaware in their rear, actually impassable, or liable to become so, at any moment, by the floating ice. After night set in, and the two armies were lying by their fires, within a few hundred yards of each other, a council of war was held, to determine whether to await, in their present position, the attack of an enemy of superior force and discipline, and exasperated to recover the fortune of a campaign most unexpectedly snatched from them just at its close, or what other course to take. One of the boldest and best conceived operations in the war was determined on; to turn the left flank of the enemy, and, by a secret and forced march, to fall upon their rear, or attack their posts at Princeton or Brunswick, as the best means of sustaining and completing the success begun by the surprise of the Hessians at Trenton. The fires in the American camp were left burning. The night march to Princeton began about midnight, and was conducted by a back road, not generally known, except to those familiar with the neigh-

borhood of Trenton and Princeton. The following hurried letter from the Adjutant-General is probably the only contemporaneous memorial of the doings of that night.

“ East Side of Trenton Creek, January 2d, 1777.

“ Twelve o'clock at Night.

“ DEAR GENERAL PUTNAM,

“ The enemy advanced upon us to-day. We came to the east side of the river or creek which runs through Trenton, when it was resolved to make a forced march, and attack the enemy in Princeton. In order to do this with the greatest security, our baggage is sent off to Burlington. His Excellency begs you will march immediately forward, with all the force you can collect at Crosswicks, where you will find a very advantageous post; your advanced party at Allentown. You will also send a good guard for our baggage, wherever it may be. Let us hear from you as often as possible. We shall do the same by you.

“ Yours,                    J. REED.”

Reed, after despatching this letter to Philadelphia, accompanied Washington on the march, and shared in the dangers and honor of the battle of Princeton, on the 3d of January; the engagement which closed with sudden success the campaign of 1776. During the remainder of

the month of January, when the Commander-in-chief made his head-quarters at Morristown, his letters, addressed to the Adjutant-General, when absent at the other posts, show how much reliance he was placing, both in important matters and in minute details of duty, upon Reed's zeal, activity, and knowledge of the country in which the campaign was happily completed.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*Elected Brigadier-General by Congress.—Appointed Brigadier of Cavalry by Washington.—Appointed Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.—Declines the Appointment.—Rejoins the Army as a Volunteer.—Elected to the Continental Congress.—Battle of Germantown.—Cantonment at Whitemarsh.—Military Councils.—Reed's Plan of Attack on New York.—Skirmish of the 6th of December, 1777.*

WHEN both armies had retired to winter quarters, and the active operations of the campaign were ended, Colonel Reed, according to the intention which he had for a time relinquished, as has been already stated, resigned the office of

Adjutant-General of the Continental army. This resignation was followed by a distinguished tribute to his character and services during the campaign, rendered by Washington, and which, considering that the difficulty arising from Lee's letter, described in a former chapter, had not, at this time, been removed by explanation, was especially honorable to both parties. When Washington first received from Reed an intimation of his purpose of resigning the post of Adjutant-General, he proposed, in reply, to recommend him to Congress for appointment of a general command of cavalry; and, when the subject of an increase of general officers was urged upon Congress by Washington, in his letter of the 22d of January, 1777, he added this special recommendation; "I shall also beg leave to recommend Colonel Reed to the command of the horse, as a person, in my opinion, in every way qualified; for he is extremely active and enterprising, many signal proofs of which he has given this campaign."

In February, Congress elected ten brigadiers, but took no order on Washington's special recommendation for the cavalry command. On the 12th of May, Colonel Reed was elected a brigadier; and, a few days after, Congress passed a resolution, empowering the Commander-in-chief to give the command of the horse to one of the

brigadiers. Just before the adoption of this resolution, Washington, in a letter to Colonel Moylan, said, "If Congress have it not in contemplation to appoint a general of horse, but leave it to me to assign one of the brigadiers, already appointed, to that command, I shall assuredly place General Reed there, as it is agreeable to my own recommendation and original design. Of this please, in my name, to inform him; but add, as it would not be agreeable to me, and, I am sure, could not be so to him, to be placed in a situation that might be the standing of a day only, I could wish to know what the views of Congress are on this head, which Mr. Thomson, or any of the members, I suppose, could inform. I would have written to General Reed myself on the subject and other matters, but my extreme hurry will not permit me to do it, and therefore I decline it altogether. Be so obliging as to offer my best regards to him, and assure him that I read his name in the appointment of brigadiers with great pleasure."

"P. S. Having occasion to write to Congress by this day's post, I will request a determination of the matter mentioned in this letter, respecting the commanding officer of the horse, that I may know on what ground to act."

On the day that Washington received the resolution of Congress, he immediately, by the fol-

lowing letter to Colonel Reed, carried into effect the wish, which he had cherished for several months respecting a favorite officer.

“Middlebrook, 29th of May, 1777.

“DEAR SIR,

“Congress having empowered me, by a resolve transmitted to me this morning, to assign one of the generals, already appointed, to the command of the light-horse, I mean that you should act in that line, if agreeable to yourself; and I wish you, in that case, to repair to camp as soon as you can.

“I am, dear Sir, with esteem, &c.

“GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

In an unofficial letter to Reed, some weeks later, Washington urged him to accept the appointment; but, strong as was the inducement to assent to such earnest and friendly solicitation, on the score of personal friendship, he felt constrained, by other reasons, to decline the command. It was impossible to overlook the dilatory and evasive action of Congress, who had suffered four months to pass without taking any order on Washington’s special recommendation, and then referred the selection to him. The adverse feeling in Congress towards the Commander-in-chief and his friends, which came to maturity in the

following year, was beginning to manifest itself at this time; and, with respect to General Reed, it was further aggravated by a rumor, sedulously circulated, that, during the previous campaign, especially in New York, he had expressed himself freely and injuriously respecting a portion of the New England troops, and had thus fomented discord between the troops of the several states. With a deep sense of the injustice of such an imputation, and of complaint incurred by faithful and strict discharge of his duties as Adjutant-General, Reed was unwilling that his acceptance of an appointment should, in the least degree, be the occasion of disturbing the harmony which he knew ought to exist between Congress and the Commander-in-chief. His feeling of what was due both to himself and to the public interests was expressed in a letter addressed, on this occasion, to a member of Congress, in which, after adverting to the great difficulties of discipline during the campaign in New York, and to the prejudicial and dangerous influences of insidious and irresponsible private letters on the subject of military discipline and duties, he proceeded to say,

“The last campaign was, in all respects, a very difficult and dangerous one. I pray most ardently we may never see such another, and, now that the army is raised on a different foot

ing, I trust we never shall. It must be evident, to every one of the smallest experience, that the plan of temporary enlistments, and appointments to office by popular assemblies, are incompatible with the discipline and subordination necessary to give vigor and efficacy to an army. I have the satisfaction of reflecting, that, during my continuance in office, the army never was surprised, (for Long Island was a separate command, and I was not there till I accompanied the General;) that I never was absent one hour from duty during the whole summer, fall, and winter, till sent to stir up the militia of Jersey; that, though, supposing the campaign was over, I had resigned, yet, finding my mistake, returned immediately to the army, and, from my knowledge of the country, contributed, in some degree, to its success. When I reflect upon these things, I flatter myself that those whom I have served will consider my character collectively, and excuse any inadvertencies which haste, zeal, and anxiety for consequences, may have occasioned in times the most perilous and critical.

"I have taken up thus much of your time, my dear Sir, in vindication of my character, which I have reason to believe has been aspersed by some of these private correspondents of members of Congress, and particularly from Connecticut. You will please to make that use

of it which your good judgment will suggest, and which you may think my character requires. I shall only, therefore, trouble you with one remark further; that, if I had any prejudices or predilections, they were in favor of a people by whom now my reputation is most likely to suffer. My education, religious profession, politics, and connections, led me to what some of my friends thought an indiscreet zeal in their behalf. To what, therefore, a change in me is to be attributed, I must leave you to judge. Sure I am, that, unless there is a happier choice of officers, or more discipline and subordination, my country will have more reason to lament than I have to complain.

"I now proceed to what has chiefly led me to address you at this time. Upon my signifying to the General my intention of resigning, he proposed to me to recommend me to Congress for the command of the cavalry. As that is a line of service not liable, in my opinion, to the same difficulties as the other, I acquiesced in the recommendation, and have been waiting the result. So much time having elapsed, I think it probable that some difficulties may have arisen between the inclination of Congress and their compliance to the General's recommendation, an embarrassment from which I ought to relieve them, as I am informed in no instance has any request

or recommendation from him been slighted or refused. I should be sorry that this should happen with respect to me, and equally so that the inclinations of Congress should be forced.

"Any claims or pretensions I may have, were they much greater than they are, ought not to disturb the harmony which ought to exist between the civil and military powers. I feel myself too inconsiderable to think I make any sacrifice in the declaration. Many, I doubt not, may be found, fully equal to the post, and in whom all favor may centre. Should my apprehension on this subject be well founded, you will make such use of this letter as will obviate any difficulties."

On General Reed's declining the post, the Commander-in-chief appears to have made no second selection, but left the responsibility with Congress, who, some months after, elected Count Pulaski to the command of the horse. The appointment by Congress to the rank of Brigadier in the Continental army was also declined; and, from this time, as soon as active operations were resumed in the campaign of 1777, Reed joined the army as a volunteer, and continued in constant and active service, without rank or pay.

At this period of Reed's life, our attention is recalled to his professional career, by a circumstance which at once causes a feeling of sur-

prise, coming in such close connection with his services in the field, and exemplifies the curious blending together of civic and military pursuits, which is apt to occur in revolutionary times. While Congress had before them General Washington's recommendation of him for the post of Brigadier-General of cavalry, he was chosen, on the 20th of March, 1777, by a unanimous vote of the Executive Council of the state of Pennsylvania, to be the first Chief Justice under the new constitution.

Mr. Reed was only thirty-four years of age, when he received this distinguished mark of confidence in his personal and professional character; and the honor may be best appreciated by considering, in connection with it, the eminence of those men who held the first place in the colonial judiciary of Pennsylvania, and in later times; a station which had already been held by Allen and Chew, and afterwards was to be occupied by McKean, Shippen, and Tilghman. The appointment was made, too, with a knowledge that Mr. Reed was not politically in sympathy with the Council by whom he was chosen, and that he was not in favor of the new constitution. An answer to the appointment was delayed for some time, in the hope that something might be effected to produce harmony between the parties in the state, at a period when internal discord

was so much to be deprecated; but, being disappointed in this, Mr. Reed declined the office, in a letter dated July 22d, setting forth, at some length, his views of the constitution, and closing with these paragraphs.

"I have expressed myself very differently from my intentions, if what I have offered admits an idea of my becoming an opposer of the execution of the present government, much more to seek its entire subversion. A change of systems is so obviously dangerous to all those principles of obedience on which government is founded, that I think it far more eligible to supply the defects of that we now have, than to substitute one entirely new. If the sense of the people, who have the right of decision, leads to some alterations, I firmly believe it will greatly conduce to our happiness and security; if otherwise, I shall esteem it my duty not only to acquiesce, but to support a form of government confirmed and ratified by the voice of the people.

"In the mean time, I beg leave to tender my services in any line conducive to the general interest or defence, or consistent with the sentiments I have disclosed. And I shall esteem myself happy if my small abilities, influence, or experience, can, in any respect, assist or promote the wishes and views of gentlemen, who, under

many difficulties, have borne so great and disinterested a share of the public burden."

It was just a month after declining this high judicial station, that, on the receipt of the news of the disembarkation of the British army at the head of the Chesapeake, Reed promptly resumed a military life, by joining the army as a volunteer, attaching himself especially to the Pennsylvania troops, which, under the command of his valued friend, General John Armstrong, (the elder,) formed part of Washington's force. This division of the army, being stationed at a lower ford, had no opportunity of sharing in the engagement at the battle of the Brandywine, and, indeed, not being apprized, until a late hour, of the defeat of the other divisions, with some difficulty effected its retreat and joined the main body at Chester. Reed was present at the council of war, by which it was then determined to assemble the militia along the River Schuylkill, and, being well acquainted with the country, assisted General Armstrong in selecting the proper places for redoubts at the fords.

All exertions to defend the passage of this river proved unavailing, and the British General succeeded in crossing it, and throwing his army between the American army and Philadelphia. Reed's family was at this season at a country residence, so situated on the Schuylkill that he

apprehended they would be exposed to danger, if the British army pushed their march to Philadelphia, and crossed the river in their neighborhood. In writing for the assistance of a kinsman, he says, "I have but few things besides the women and children to remove." His wife, who, the year before, with her young and unprotected family, was near falling into the power of the Hessian troops, advancing towards her place of refuge in the Pines of New Jersey, had now a still narrower escape on the approach of the enemy, who reached the house in fifteen minutes after Reed left it. He immediately collected a party of about fifty men, at the Norrington meeting-house, a mile above his own house, and, returning with them, succeeded in carrying off two prisoners. The intelligence gained from them was despatched to Washington, in a hurried letter, written on a blank page of a child's copy-book.

It was during this anxious and adventurous month, that Reed received another public call to transfer him from military to civil life, being elected a delegate in Congress by the Assembly of Pennsylvania, on the 14th of September, 1777. He continued, however, with the army, which was encamped on the high grounds east of the Schuylkill, about twenty miles above the city. On the 26th of September, the advance guard

of the British army took possession of Philadelphia, the main body remaining at Germantown.

Allowing two or three days' rest, as necessary for the troops, Washington lost no time in determining, with his council of war, upon a plan of moving lower down, and making arrangements for an attack. On the 1st of October, Pulaski, the brigadier of cavalry, under an order from the Commander-in-chief, detailed a party of picked horsemen to accompany Generals Reed and Cadwalader upon special duty; the two Philadelphia officers being intrusted with the duty of reconnoitring, preparatory to the attack made three days after. On the evening of the 3d, Washington broke up his camp, and on the next day the battle of Germantown was fought. The particulars of that half-victorious engagement need not be dwelt on here. When the halt took place at Chew's house, in consequence of its occupation by Musgrave's detachment, and the hurried military council adopted General Knox's opinion in favor of an attempt to dislodge the enemy from the house, General Reed is described by Gordon, in his history of the war, as warmly opposing the halt, and proposing to disregard the party in the house, and to advance in full force to the support of Sullivan and Wayne.\*

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\* Gordon, after mentioning the halt in front of Chew's house, adds, "A discourse ensues between Generals Knox

After the battle, the American army retired to a distance of about twelve miles from the city, at Whitemarsh, and afterwards a few miles further, to the Skippack Hills, while Sir William Howe withdrew his posts to the immediate neighborhood of Philadelphia, and fortified his position by a line of redoubts and abatis from the Schuylkill to the Delaware. The country between Chestnut Hill and the city remained exposed to the incursions of either party. The interval between the battle, on the 4th of October, and the close of the campaign, was occupied, on the part of the American army, with various plans of attack upon the enemy in the city ; of distressing them, by cutting off the communication with their shipping, and supplies from the disaffected ; and of reënforcing the forts on the Delaware, to prevent the approach of Lord Howe's vessels.

In the various enterprises connected with these objects, General Reed had a frequent and important part, which displayed that aptness for sound military opinion, and promptness and en-

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and Reed, in the presence of the Commander-in-chief, whether or no to advance without first reducing the house. Knox urges that it is contrary to all military rule to leave a fort possessed by an enemy in the rear. Reed exclaims, "What ! call this a fort, and lose the happy moment!"

*History of the American Revolution*, Vol. II. p. 523

ergy in the details of military service, which distinguished his career as a soldier. Besides displaying much zeal in obtaining intelligence, to be transmitted to head-quarters, he appears also to have been charged with the informal duty of keeping the Executive Council of the state, at this time removed with Congress to Lancaster, duly informed respecting the operations of the army, and to have represented at head-quarters the wishes of the council, while the chief city was in the possession of the enemy, and a valuable district of the state the scene of warfare.

In the latter part of October, with a view to ascertain what support could be given to the forts on the Delaware, and what interruption to the enemy's convoys and supplies, Reed, accompanied by Cadwalader, went down into Chester county to gain a thorough knowledge of the country, and the situation of the British forces. They returned to head-quarters, agreeing as to the facts, and in opinion that something effectual might now be accomplished; and a movement of the army was proposed, but not favored by the military council.

The only measure of the kind, and attended with the prospect of bringing on an important engagement between large detachments of the two armies, was when, intelligence having been received that a large number of wagons, with an

escort of fifteen hundred men, had passed over the lower ferry of the Schuylkill from Philadelphia, to go down to the ships for provisions, General McDougal was ordered to march and attack them. It was found, however, that the escort proved to be a large detachment, which took post at Gray's Ferry, where they began to fortify, in order to protect the bridge. McDougal's force was immediately strengthened by Potter's command, and the whole detachment, amounting to about four thousand men, ordered to attack the new post at Gray's Ferry, and destroy the bridge. Reed, who was to have accompanied General Greene, for whom the command of the expedition was first intended, proceeded with McDougal. The march was made at night; and when the ground was reached at sunrise, to their great surprise, they found the post had been evacuated the evening before, and the bridge broken to pieces. The detachment, after destroying the enemy's huts and works, returned to camp, without having been able to bring on an engagement, but having made a good impression on the country they passed through.

The hope of relieving the forts on the Delaware continued to be entertained, and, in the month of November, Reed was again engaged in reconnoitring, with this object in view, in company with some of the cavalry, under the

command of Captain, afterwards Major Henry Lee. From this officer's quarters, Reed wrote to Washington, proposing to attempt the relief of the forts, by a surprise of the British force in that quarter, and, if necessary, to bring down the whole force of the American army for the purpose. The suggestion appears to have been in some degree favored by Washington, who had not relinquished the hope of offensive operations, and accordingly requested Reed to go into Chester county, to explain to some officers in command the principles of a plan for the relief of Fort Mifflin. The officers returned, and reported at head-quarters in favor of the plan; but the evacuation of the fort, just at that time, after a gallant and protracted defence, put an end to all these projects.

The only offensive movement, which then presented itself for discussion, was an attack upon the enemy in Philadelphia, with a view to which, Washington, in company with several of the general officers, reconnoitred the lines in person. Reed accompanied the reconnoitring party, and concurred with the large majority in disapproving Lord Stirling's plan of an attack on the British army, who were well intrenched in the city, behind a chain of redoubts extending from the Schuylkill to the Delaware, on the north of Philadelphia; the defences being in all respects

strongly secured ; besides which, the American army was not in full force, since Greene had been detached into Jersey. After this plan was abandoned, an attack on the city, on the western side across the Schuylkill, when the river should be frozen, was talked of, but not seriously entertained, and the campaign was fast drawing to a close, without any hope of any offensive operation.

Availing himself of this occasion, Reed spent two or three days with his family, who were at a few miles' distance from camp ; but he carried with him, along with the disappointment at the loss of all opportunity for vigorous measures against the enemy in Pennsylvania, an undaunted zeal still for some project by which the cause of his country might be revived, as it had been the year before by the successes at Trenton and Princeton. He saw with solicitude the state of the public feeling, the discontented complaining that nothing more was done, and the judicious and prudent viewing with concern the approach of another campaign without some event to raise the spirits of the army and country, and sustain the sinking credit of the Continental money. An interval of inactivity in camp gave him a very brief and hurried enjoyment of domestic repose, which was devoted, however, to the preparation of a very elaborate letter, addressed to Washing-

ton, on the 1st of December, and proposing for his consideration a plan of operations, which, for boldness of conception, and minute and judicious anticipation of the difficulties which might be encountered, is entitled to high commendation, uncertain as that must necessarily be when bestowed upon any untried military project.

This memoir does not admit of the introduction of a document of such length, but it may be referred to as showing how powerfully Reed's mind had taken hold of the study of military operations, how much it had become familiarized with practical details, and withal, how elastic his spirit was in planning a very bold movement in a season of hesitation and reluctance in venturing beyond defensive measures. The letter is highly honorable to the writer for this reason also, that, while it illustrates his comprehensive views as to military operations, it shows an entire freedom from the narrow local feeling which was too often manifested, to the annoyance and perplexity of the Commander-in-chief. The plan proposed was for an attempt to be made for the recovery of New York, by attacking, and, if possible, surprising the reduced British force that was left in guard of that city, and for getting possession of the valuable military stores there.

The great advantage he anticipated from the success of the plan, was not so much the defeat

of a division of the British army, and the supplying the deplorable necessities of the American troops, in midwinter, from an abundant magazine of military stores, important as these objects would be, but the moral effect, at home and abroad, of showing that the enemy was not able to hold their conquests. The plan was matured in Reed's mind, together with accurate intelligence as to the condition of the British posts, and is enforced in the letter by a very full military argument, and various conceivable objections are carefully considered. One of the most obvious difficulties, the probability of the attempt being intercepted by reënforcements quickly detached from the main body of the army in Philadelphia, is met by an expression of his belief, stated with much confident composure, in consequence of his familiarity with the country through New Jersey, that, if intrusted with the service, he could, with a small force of horse and foot, so obstruct the roads, at that season, as effectually to retard the advance of reënforcements.

This letter was hardly despatched to headquarters, before Reed received a letter from Washington, dated December 2d, 1777, saying, "If you can, with any convenience, let me see you to-day; I shall be thankful for it. I am about fixing the winter cantonments of the army, and find so many and such capital objections to

each mode proposed, that I am exceedingly embarrassed, not only by the advice given me, but in my own judgment, and should be very glad of your sentiments on the matter without loss of time." A letter was also received from General Cadwalader, expressing anxiety as to the selection of winter quarters, and soliciting his presence at head-quarters.

Reed lost no time in repairing to camp, which he reached in time, not only to influence the decision as to winter quarters, but also to have a share in the last action of the campaign. On the 5th of December, 1777, Howe moved out of Philadelphia in full force, to attack Washington's army, and make good the boast of driving it beyond the mountains. The next morning, the American army was under arms and prepared for battle, when General Irwin was ordered, on the first approach of the enemy, to march to Chestnut Hill. At the foot of the hill, a sharp skirmish took place, when the militia gave way, leaving Irwin wounded upon the field, and in a few minutes a prisoner. At another part of the lines, Reed and Cadwalader were, at General Washington's request, observing the movements of the enemy, when a considerable force advanced rapidly upon the Pennsylvania militia under General Potter. The two volunteer officers assisted him in drawing up his troops, who gave way, how-

ever, and were thrown into disorder by a fire from the enemy, who were pressing on.

Finding a number of the soldiers willing to place themselves under his command, Reed rallied a sufficient body to advance upon the enemy with a favorable opportunity of flanking one of their parties; but the first impression could not be repaired, and the next fire put them to flight again, leaving Reed on the field. His horse, receiving a musket ball in the head, fell under him, and, while he was extricating himself from his dying horse, and recovering from the fall, a party of the enemy were seen by Captain Allen McLane, of the Delaware troops, running towards him with fixed bayonets. General Reed was indebted for his life, on this occasion, to the promptness and gallantry of a Maryland light-horseman, who, seeing his danger, rode rapidly up, and carried him off on his horse; McLane, at the same time, ordering a charge which drove the party back.\*

After considerable skirmishing, the British force

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\* In a letter, of the 7th of December, General Armstrong, writing with the sympathy of an old soldier for the loss of arms and accoutrements, says, "Yesterday, General Reed, leading some of our militia, with whom he fell in when reconnoitring, had his horse shot through the head, lost one of his pistols, saddle, and bridle, which he was obliged to leave with his dead horse, himself having a narrow escape."

was drawn off, and soon, to the great surprise and disappointment of Washington and his officers, marched back into Philadelphia. "Their avowed intention in coming out," writes Reed, "was to attack the army. This induced the General to make a disposition adapted to their design, and it was with great concern we found they relinquished it, as I have not the least doubt but, with the smiles of Heaven, we should have gained a complete victory. His Excellency expressed the strongest inclination to attack them, as soon as it was known they would not attack us; but his principal officers were utterly opposed to it, as the enemy lay too little a time in one place to give a knowledge of their situation, or make a disposition for such an attempt. I think more enterprise in our army would be acceptable; but I must say, in justice to the Commander-in-chief, that there has been such a unanimity of opinion against every offensive movement proposed, as would have discouraged an older and more experienced officer than this war could yet produce."

Reed was present at the closing scene of the campaign, when, on the night of the 10th of December, the army broke up its camp at Whitemarsh, and took up its line of march for the west side of the Schuylkill. When two divisions

had crossed the river, the enemy unexpectedly appeared on the neighboring hills, a detachment, as it was ascertained, of four or five thousand men, under Lord Cornwallis. It was thought by some of the general officers a favorable opportunity to attack the enemy thus detached, and they proposed immediately crossing the river for the purpose. With this opinion Reed earnestly concurred, and deplored that a successful and destructive foraging expedition should have been accomplished in sight, as it were, of the whole American army. It was the last military question of the campaign, and the proposal for the attack was not sustained, but the army crossed the Schuylkill, and, on the 17th of December, established its winter quarters at Valley Forge.

## CHAPTER X.

*Reelected to Congress.—Commissioner for Indian Affairs.—Committee to go to Camp.—Valley Forge.—Prevalent Disaffection in the Neighborhood of Philadelphia.—Refugee Officers.—Defence of Persons and Property from their Attacks.—Reed's Letters on the Subject.—Takes his Seat in Congress.—Returns to Valley Forge.—Arrival of British Commissioners.—Governor Johnston.—Mrs. Ferguson.—Attempt at Bribery.—Reed's Answer.—Battle of Monmouth.—Return to Congress.—Professionally engaged in Trials for Treason.*

SUCH was the active interest which Reed, as a volunteer, took in the operations of the campaign in Pennsylvania, that he did not join the delegation in Congress at all under his election of September, 1777. But just at the close of the campaign, a new election took place on the 10th of December, when he was again chosen, Franklin and Robert Morris being in the same delegation.

During his absence from Congress, the organization of a new board of war had been discussed, and his name was proposed in connection with

it. In October, Richard Henry Lee wrote to Washington, "The business of a board of war is so extensive, so important, and demanding such constant attention, that Congress see clearly the necessity of constituting a new board out of Congress, whose time shall be entirely devoted to that essential department. It is by some warmly proposed, that the board shall be filled by the three following gentlemen, Colonel Reed; Colonel Pickering, the present Adjutant-General; and Colonel Harrison, your secretary." The expectation of Reed's continuance in Congress caused the substitution of General Mifflin in his stead, when the appointment of the board was made.

A little later, during his absence at camp, Congress appointed him a commissioner for Indian affairs on the western frontiers of Pennsylvania. The object of this commission was to concert measures with General Hand, then at Fort Pitt, for the pacification of the disaffected Indians, and the reduction of the British post at Detroit. Mr. Reed declined the appointment, and George Clymer was elected.

The sufferings of the Americans during the winter of 1777-8, in their cantonments on the Schuylkill at Valley Forge, have been often described; but the just and painful impression received from the narrative of them is best confirmed by an examination of the orderly books,

which, being the daily record of the occurrences of the camp, show most minutely the extent and severity of the destitution and distress of various kinds that were endured, and the difficulty of preserving discipline and subordination in such circumstances. In Washington's long and feeling letter to Congress, of the 23d of December, representing the condition of the army, he urged, that two or three members of the newly constituted board of war, and a committee of their own body, should be sent, without delay, to camp, to concert with him measures for the next campaign. In January a committee was appointed, having Mr. Dana for its chairman, and Mr. Reed, who had not left the army to take his seat in Congress, for one of its members.

The committee repaired to camp, and entered with great energy upon their arduous and almost hopeless task, which was nothing less than the reform and reëstablishment of the army. The personal experience which Reed had had, during this and former campaigns, of defects and abuses in the organization of the army, inspired him with especial zeal in providing remedies for them, and in removing some of the difficulties which his military companions were laboring under. He exerted himself with untiring assiduity on the business of the committee, and seven reports in his handwriting are preserved among the archives of Con-

gress, all of much interest, and among them one for the reorganization of the Quartermaster's department, which led to the important appointment of his friend General Greene to the charge of that branch of the service. The value of Reed's services at camp, and a natural reluctance to separate himself from those he had been associated with during the whole of the active part of the campaign, occasioned his remaining at Valley Forge, after his colleagues on the committee returned to Congress, and, in fact, with intermissions only for a day or two at a time, during the remainder of the winter. He, in this way, became a sharer in the miseries of those destitute and suffering winter quarters.

Besides the special duties of the committee, another subject appears to have occupied much of Reed's thoughts while in camp. When the army was withdrawn up the Schuylkill to the winter quarters, there was much solicitude as to the unprotected condition of inhabitants in the country nearer to the city, who were well affected to the American cause. With the enemy in possession of Philadelphia, and with their successes, the disaffected became more confident, and increased in numbers to an alarming extent. The homes of those who were faithful to the cause of their country, as soon as the army retired from their neighborhood, would be left exposed to the

double danger of injury from the enemy and from the disaffected. In the whole district around the city there were many, some openly and some covertly, who were vigilant to serve the British interests, and to furnish intelligence, provisions, and facilities of every kind. During the earlier part of the campaign Reed had observed indications of this danger, and of the probable intercourse between the disaffected and the enemy.

On one occasion, when reconnoitring in company with Cadwalader, they were informed, by a person who mistook them for British troopers, that Generals Reed and Cadwalader were somewhere in the neighborhood, and might be taken. Immediately on the close of the campaign, when it was found impracticable to leave, as had been proposed, a brigade of Continental troops, to cover and protect such of the inhabitants as would be in danger, Reed wrote to the President of the Executive Council of the state, representing the necessity of some provision being made. "The situation of the country, from Delaware to Schuylkill, is very distressing, and calls aloud for attention and help from some quarter. I fear the chief Whig inhabitants must fly. If the state will raise a few troops for the winter, for the purpose of covering the country, I should think it a happy measure; and, though I have given over thoughts of proceeding further in the

military line, I would, for so desirable an end, accept of any post or office wherever I could be useful. I shudder at the distress of the inhabitants, who must either submit or suffer much hardship."

These apprehensions were realized ; for, during the occupation of Philadelphia, not only was the treasonable intercourse with the enemy carried to a great extent in the way of furnishing supplies to the British troops, but the inhabitants of the neighborhood, for many miles round, were harassed by regularly formed predatory bands, under several refugee officers, who acquired an odious notoriety in this service. An irregular warfare, of a most atrocious kind, was carried on, for the purpose of the surprise of defenceless persons, and the plunder or devastation of unprotected property. The roofless and blackened walls of burnt dwelling-houses, along the roads leading into the city, showed the extent of this inhuman system of hostilities. In February, Mrs. Reed writes to one of her friends, "It has already become too dangerous for my husband to be at home more than one day at a time, and that seldom and uncertain. Indeed, I am easiest when he is from home, as his being here brings danger with it. There are so many disaffected to the cause of their country, that they lie in wait for those who are active in it."

Gouverneur Morris, who had been added to the committee at camp, writes to Mr. Jay, "The free, open, and undisguised communication with Philadelphia debauches the minds of those in its vicinage with astonishing rapidity." And General Washington, after referring to what he styles "this pernicious intercourse," adds, "If any of the persons engaged in it are proper objects to make examples of, it must be done. They have had sufficient warnings, and cannot, therefore, plead ignorance in excuse of their crime."

If Reed had, at the beginning of the campaign, foreseen these evils, he was not less earnest to withstand them, now they had come to pass, and while he saw around him the destitution and the misery of the half-clad and half-fed soldiers at Valley Forge, in dismal contrast with the condition of the troops of the enemy, comfortably quartered in city dwelling-houses, and abundantly supplied by the treasonable communication of the disaffected neighbors. He again wrote to President Wharton, from camp, "The intercourse between the country and the town has produced all the consequences foreseen by many in the beginning of the winter. The supply of provisions, to recruit and refresh our enemies, I count the least pernicious. The minds of the inhabitants are seduced, their principles tainted, and opposition enfeebled. A familiarity

with the enemy lessens their abhorrence of them and their measures. Even good Whigs begin to think peace, at some expense, desirable. The currency, for twenty miles round the town, stagnates ; the hope of getting to market with their produce induces them to keep it back, and deny they have it."

After suggesting various restrictions on intercourse on any pretext with the city, he urged the formation of a special corps of militia for this service, adding, "Infantry alone, I fear, would not be equal to the duty ; but this might soon be remedied, as I am sure there are a number of young fellows of reputation, that would soon form a corps to act in conjunction with the foot. The enemy have formed a corps of country light-horse, under one Jacob James, which has already been very mischievous, and will be more so. No person conspicuous in civil and military life, not with the army, or at a great distance, will be safe, if some body of the same kind is not raised for the protection of its citizens. Horse and foot should act together, to be efficacious ; and you may depend upon it the Continental horse and militia foot will not harmonize. That you will come into this, after some time, I have no doubt ; but, if you delay it, I have no doubt, in the course of this spring, you will lose some of your best citizens. This

has been the case in New Jersey, some of the members of whose legislature are now languishing in the jails of New York. Fifty men, with a proportion of good officers, will be quite sufficient."

The magnitude of the evil called for the action of Congress, in the preamble and resolution of the 26th of February, setting forth that persons had associated for the purpose of seizing, and secretly conveying to places in possession of the British forces, such of the loyal citizens and soldiers of the United States as might fall into their power, which had, in some instances, been accomplished by the assistance of parties furnished by the enemy; and resolving, that any person guilty of such combination, or any assistance to it, should suffer death by the judgment of a court-martial. It was also proposed, by a committee, as a mode of putting a stop to the atrocities that were perpetrated, that Congress should authorize the employment of warlike Indians, to patrol the country round Philadelphia, and cut off the intercourse.

Mr. Reed's stay at the camp at Valley Forge prevented his taking his seat in Congress till the 6th of April; and, on the 11th, he received leave of absence, for the purpose of removing his family to a place of greater security than Norriton; this having become the more incumbent

upon him from the precarious health of his wife, for whom, with her children, flight was again become necessary; and a residence was taken in the northern part of New Jersey.

In June, Reed again repaired to camp, in consequence of a resolution of Congress, which transmitted to the Commander-in-chief a plan of military organization, with authority to proceed, "with the advice and assistance of Mr. J. Reed and Mr. Dana, or either of them," to arrange it. Reed appears to have been the member of the committee who proceeded to head-quarters on this duty, which occupied him during the remainder of the time spent by the army at Valley Forge.

Before the army left that post, where their stay was protracted as late as the month of June, 1778, intelligence was received of the arrival of the British commissioners, Lord Carlisle, Mr. Eden, and Governor Johnstone, accompanied by Dr. Adam Ferguson, the historian, as the secretary of the commission.\* They reached Philadelphia on the 6th of the month; and, in a few days, two letters were forwarded to General Reed at camp, one from his brother-in-law, Mr. De Berdt, and

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\* Frederick, fifth Earl of Carlisle, known afterwards as Lord Byron's guardian; William Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland; and George Johnstone, a commander in the royal navy, and, at one time, Governor of East Florida.

the other, enclosed in it, from Governor Johnstone, both written in London. When, in 1776, Lord Howe came out as the first commissioner, Mr. De Berdt had taken a personal interest, by conference with him, and by correspondence with his American relative, in the attempt to bring about a reconciliation.

His disappointment, on that occasion, did not discourage him from renewing his efforts to restore amicable relations, when the second commission came out, in 1778; and he flattered himself with the hope of some harmonious result, from the fact that one of the commissioners, Governor Johnstone, had been an active and steady opponent, in the House of Commons, of Lord North's administration, and obtained, by his speeches, the character of being a friend of America. Sincerely and reasonably entertaining this opinion, Mr. De Berdt was anxious to impress Mr. Reed with it, and wrote, assuring him that Johnstone went to America as a commissioner of *peace*, and a steady and proved friend to America and its just rights; and that, on conference with him, he had learned that every thing short of total independence would be granted; that the election of the governors and legislatures in America should be complete; that the paper money should be funded and secured by Great

Britain ; and, in short, all causes of dissatisfaction removed.

The letter from Governor Johnstone to General Reed, received at the same time, was plausibly and dexterously composed. It was highly complimentary to Reed, and expressed not only decided approbation of the original principles and conduct of American resistance, but unreserved condemnation of the "folly and the faults," as he styled them, of the ministerial policy ; employing, in his letter, the same tone of opinion as he had used as an opposition member on the floor of the House of Commons. After some professions of anxiety to restore harmony between the two countries, and some reflections upon the magnanimity of a conciliatory spirit on the part of America, he added, towards the close of the letter, "The man who can be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and to unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth, will deserve more, from the King and the people, from patriotism, humanity, friendship, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation, than ever was yet bestowed on human kind." He concluded by saying, that he should endeavor to make such use of the communication which Mr. De Berdt's introduction

might give him with General Reed, as the answer to his letter might enable him.

After reading the letter, Reed placed it in the hands of General Washington, and some of the gentlemen at head-quarters. The draft of an answer he communicated to Robert Morris, one of his colleagues in the Pennsylvania delegation, who happened to be in camp; and, finding that it was approved by him, he took the further precaution of submitting it to the judgment of Washington, who returned it, with the suggestion of some verbal alterations in the complimentary part of the answer. These corrections being made, the letter was written, and, being again shown to Washington, and approved by him, was left at head-quarters, to be forwarded to Governor Johnstone. This letter never reached its destination, having miscarried, probably, in the confusion arising from the breaking up of the encampment at Valley Forge, and the evacuation of Philadelphia.\* It was a courteous and decided reply to a complimentary communication from one, whose parliamentary course had placed him among the British advocates of the colonial cause. On the subject of the recep-

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\* The original letter from General Reed to Governor Johnstone is now in the possession of Mr. Peter Force, of Washington, editor of the "American Archives."

tion of the commissioners, and the prospect of negotiation, being a member of Congress, he declined expressing any opinion, as "equally useless and improper," in anticipation of the action of that body. This official reserve did not, however, prevent his going on to say, with great candor, to the commissioner, that, after the series of ministerial injuries and insults, a negotiation under the auspices of the men who then directed the affairs of Britain had much to struggle with; and he further intimated, that it might be the dictate of true wisdom and virtue, for the ministry to abandon a visionary scheme of conquest and empire, and look rather to the solid benefits of amity and commerce with independent America.

Not receiving General Reed's answer, Governor Johnstone, who appears to have charged himself with the secret service of the commission, proceeded to take another step in the way of indirect negotiation, by writing, on the 16th of June, to Robert Morris, a letter in which he ventured upon the following more unequivocal paragraph. "I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives. But in all such transactions there is risk; and I think that whoever ventures should be secured, at the same time that honor and emolument should naturally follow the fortune of those, who have steered the

vessel in the storm, and brought her safely into port. I think that Washington and the President (Mr. Laurens) have a right to every favor that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interests, and spare the miseries and devastations of war. I wish, above all things, to see you, and hope you will so contrive it."

The evacuation of Philadelphia was at this time on the point of being made, and the commissioners were about to retire from the city with the army. Johnstone saw, therefore, that the prospect of the personal interviews he was desirous of with either Morris or Reed was very uncertain, and appears to have become impatient of the danger of disappointment in his plans. An opportunity presented itself to him, in an acquaintance which he formed in the house that was appointed for his residence during his stay in Philadelphia. A visitor to the family to whom the house belonged was Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson, an American lady, married to Mr. Hugh Henry Ferguson, a loyalist, and at the time commissary of prisoners. Mrs. Ferguson was a daughter of Dr. Græme, colonial collector of the port of Philadelphia, and granddaughter of Sir William Keith, one of the proprietary Governors of Pennsylvania. She was a lady highly esteemed, not only from her family con-

nection, but for her intelligence and accomplishments, and the active benevolence of her disposition.

Her position was such as to make her the object of respectful consideration by individuals on both sides of the pending contest; and, though her husband held office under the crown, her feelings were decidedly inclined to the American cause. Residing in the same house for several days together, Governor Johnstone and Mrs. Ferguson had repeated conversations on the subject of public affairs, in the course of which, he succeeded in impressing her mind with a confidence in his desire to accomplish a reconciliation, and to put an end to the war. In the last of these conversations, which took place on the same day that he wrote the letter to Mr. Morris, he took occasion to express the strong wish he had for an opportunity of having some communication with Reed and Morris, as men of influence in Congress, in addition to which, he went on to say, that Reed possessed, he understood, much influence with Washington, and of that influence he particularly desired to have the benefit; it being expedient, on such occasions, to apply to as few persons as possible. There remained but one step more, which was to induce Mrs. Ferguson to undertake the commission of communicating to General Reed the

offer which was shortly after made to him, and in this he succeeded, by removing her scruples by assurances that such a method of proceeding was quite customary and allowable in the conduct of negotiations.

On the 18th of June, the British army evacuated Philadelphia. It had been publicly known for some time, that their retreat was in preparation, and the inhabitants were ready from day to day to return. Reed, having sent the letter he received from Governor Johnstone to Congress, then in session at Yorktown, came into the city the same evening, where he found, as he described it, a new and curious scene; some gloomy countenances, but more joyfulness; shops shut up, and all in great anxiety and suspense. General Arnold was immediately put in command of the city, under strict injunctions, from Congress and the Commander-in-chief, to protect property and peaceable individuals, and to suppress every species of persecution, violence, or abuse. These orders were carried into execution, and no disturbance of any kind occurred.

On the 21st of June, at General Arnold's quarters, a letter was handed to General Reed, which he found to be a request from Mrs. Ferguson for a private interview with him, the subject referred to in the letter being the business then pending in the Pennsylvania Assembly re-

specting her husband's citizenship and allegiance. An appointment was made by him to wait upon the lady in the evening, when the interview took place. After conversing upon the business mentioned above, the conversation turned to the British commissioners, their business and characters. Mrs. Ferguson, mentioning her residence in the same house with Governor Johnstone, whom she described as a gentleman of great abilities and address, went on to inform General Reed that Governor Johnstone had expressed great anxiety to see him, and particularly wished to engage his influence to promote the object of the commission, a reunion of the two countries; that government would take a favorable notice of influence so exerted, and that he might have ten thousand pounds sterling, together with any office in the colonies in his Majesty's gift. The proposal was explicit, and communicated by express authority. Reed found an answer was expected, and it rose promptly to his lips in these memorable words, the simple utterance of indignant and incorruptible integrity,

"I am not worth purchasing; but, such as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to do it."

"When," says Mrs. Ferguson, in her narrative of these transactions, "I came to the most interesting part of the conversation, General Reed gave his answer without hesitation"

The interview with Mrs. Ferguson occurred on the evening of Sunday, the 21st of June, and the next day Reed joined his friend, Colonel Stephen Moylan, who, with a party of cavalry under his command, crossed into Jersey, for the purpose of following the British army, and reconnoitring on their rear. With the intelligence gained by this detachment respecting the movements of the enemy and the course of their retreat, Reed passed on and rejoined Washington, who, with the main body of the army, crossed into Jersey, at Coryell's Ferry, above Trenton. He remained with the army as a volunteer until after the British army was overtaken at Monmouth, on the 28th of June, in which battle he was actively engaged, and again had a horse shot under him.

After sharing in the battle which closed the hostilities in the region of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Reed returned to Philadelphia to resume his seat in Congress. To General Washington, and two or three of his other most intimate friends, he communicated the fact of the attempt of the British commissioner to exercise a corrupt influence; but from giving greater publicity to the transaction he was restrained by an unwillingness to expose Mrs. Ferguson to the risk of popular resentment, and also by a feeling of modesty in proclaiming the manner in which the

offer had been rejected by him. These considerations were, however, overpowered by a sense of duty, which led him, on the 18th of July, a few days after he resumed his seat, to lay the whole subject before Congress, withholding only the name of the lady. The name afterwards became known, and Mrs. Ferguson, early in the following year, prepared and published a sworn narrative of the transaction, in which a sense of her own incautiousness in suffering herself to participate in it, did not prevent her doing full justice to truth and to the integrity on which corruption had made a vain attempt.

The communication to Congress of Governor Johnstone's letters to Morris and Reed, and of the circumstances of the interview with Mrs. Ferguson, resulted in the declaration and resolutions adopted on the 11th of August, in which the commissioner's communications were denounced as direct attempts to corrupt and bribe the Congress, and in which it was resolved, "that it is incompatible with the honor of Congress to hold any manner of correspondence or intercourse with George Johnstone, Esq., especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty is interested."

In the summer of this year, Mr. Reed was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of the state of Pennsylvania, to supply

a vacancy, but did not take his place, in consequence of being in the delegation in Congress, where he continued till the month of October, at which time he gave his resignation. His attendance in Congress had been much interrupted by his military services, notwithstanding which, he bore an important part in the labors and duties of the committees, and in the discussions in the Congress of 1778, of which he, with Francis Dana and Gouverneur Morris, was among the most prominent and influential members. His name appears among the signers of the Articles of Confederation.

Soon after the evacuation of Philadelphia, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, desirous of securing the effectual administration of justice, especially with reference to the treasonable intercourse which had been carried on to so great and injurious a degree with the enemy while in possession of Philadelphia, recommended to the Executive Council of the state the employment of able counsel, to be associated with the Attorney-General, Mr. Sergeant, in the prosecution of the public offenders. Mr. Reed was selected by the Executive Council; and during the last months of his connection with Congress, in 1778, he was also occupied in the faithful and fearless discharge of this arduous professional duty

## CHAPTER XI.

*Elected President of Pennsylvania.—Reëlected.—Politics of the State.—Prosecution of Arnold.—Difficulties and Measures of the Administration.—Abolition Act.—Death of his Wife.—Revolt of the Pennsylvania Line.—Retirement from Office.—Visit to England.—Return to America.—Election to Congress.—Death.*

IN October, 1778, General Reed was elected by the people a member of the Supreme Executive Council of the state of Pennsylvania; and on the 1st of December, by the unanimous vote of both branches of the state government, he was elected President. He was reëlected annually during the whole constitutional term of three years, and retired from the office in October, 1781.

His election was an important incident in the history of the state. Nowhere had the transition from colonial to independent existence been as violent as in Pennsylvania. At the time of the declaration of independence, and even later, a large and influential party of loyalists had thwarted, and, to the full extent of their ability, perplexed, the movements of the patriots. Be-

sides, the pacific discipline and principles of the Quakers added a passive element of opposition to the popular impulses. The frame of government, which the exigency of revolution created, was not such as to command the approval of considerate men even on the popular side, and not a few arrayed themselves decidedly against it. Two parties, Constitutionalists and Anti-Constitutionalists, sprang into existence; and so violent and acrimonious did the controversy become, that open collision was with some difficulty repressed. When separation from the mother country became a settled thing, by a natural transition, the loyalists and disaffected enlisted themselves with the Anti-Constitutional party, and displayed an active sympathy with the feeling of hostility to the government which the revolution had created.

During the administration of the first President, Mr. Wharton, this party warfare continued with an intensity of feeling that was scarce kept in bounds by the imminent danger from without, on the approach of the enemy in the winter of 1776, and the actual invasion in the following year. Reed's absence at camp during this period saved him from any participation in this heated controversy, and enabled him, on his return from military service, to take a higher position, and one, too, of more beneficent influence

than could well be attained by any of the angry political disputants around him. In his letters from camp, he adverted to the politics of Pennsylvania only in the way of remonstrance against the prosecution of a controversy which he regarded as dangerously inopportune, at a time when the pressure of the war presented every reason for the union of all strength against the common enemy. He sought to dissuade all, whom his opinion might influence, from what he deplored as an unwise and unseasonable distraction of the power of the state.

At the same time, the deliberate judgment of his well balanced mind was adverse, clearly and unequivocally so, to the Constitution of 1776. In declining the office of Chief Justice, which was conferred on him in 1777, he frankly expressed the belief, that, unless amended, "the government would sink in spiritless languor, or expire in a sudden convulsion." But, with this clearly expressed opinion, he never mingled the obstinate and exclusive prejudices which were indulged in by many of those who thought as he did of the Constitution, and which engendered a virulent and factious opposition to the administration of it. There was nothing to prevent him from giving an honest and cordial support to the government during the crisis of war at their very thresholds, relying upon the wisdom

of more tranquil times for the amendment of its defects.

Both the friends and the enemies of the Constitution united in promoting General Reed's elevation to the chief magistracy, which was accepted, in the hope of reconciling the discordant parties in the state. To his military companions, it was the source of unmixed pleasure. General Greene wrote from camp, in all the cordiality of gratified friendliness, "Nothing can give me greater pleasure than Reed's appointment to the presidency; and what heightens the pleasure is, that every body is expressing their approbation." The Commander-in-chief, who felt most sensibly his dependence on the state executives, and looked to Pennsylvania with peculiar solicitude, wrote equally strong language of congratulation. They all seemed to feel, and the result justified their confidence and hope, that the executive authority of Pennsylvania, administered by one who had been a soldier of the nation, would become vigorous in their behalf.

The history of the three years of Reed's life, from 1778 to 1781, is the history of Pennsylvania, and, as such, must be very briefly disposed of in a work intended for general American biography. Reserving, therefore, a full account of his administration for a more enlarged memoir,

a few only of the most important of Pennsylvania events can be noticed here.

It is to the honor of this administration, that it was the first to rebuke and bring to justice the corrupt practices of Arnold. The particulars of his prosecution, for malversation in office during his command in Philadelphia, have already been given in another part of this series of biographies, and need, therefore, only be alluded to now.\* The course pursued by President Reed and the Executive Council showed at once both great energy and self-reliance, and, considering the obstacles thrown in the way of the prosecution, indomitable perseverance in accomplishing the purposes of justice. Arnold was enjoying a large popularity for his military services, and was countenanced and sustained by a considerable influence in Congress; besides which, his connection in marriage allied him with the still powerful loyalists of the city of Philadelphia.

President Reed was not, however, deterred by this combination of formidable influences in array against the measure which the Council originated; but, relying on Washington's high sense of justice and official responsibility, he felt assured that no misdirected sympathy would avail

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\* Sparks's "Life and Treason of Arnold," *American Biography*, Vol. III.

a public offender, if vigorously and fearlessly prosecuted. To the military sympathies of Washington Arnold appealed in vain; but, in a letter which he wrote from camp, while awaiting his trial, he dared grossly to misrepresent the feeling shown to him at head-quarters. "Let me beg of you," he said, in a familiar letter, "not to suffer the rude attacks on me to give you one moment's uneasiness. They can do us no injury. I am treated with the greatest politeness by General Washington and the officers of the army, who bitterly execrate Mr. Reed and the Council for their villainous attempt to injure me."

On the discovery of Arnold's treason, the letter in which this sentence occurred fell into the hands of the Executive Council, in consequence of the seizure of some of his papers; and President Reed at once called the attention of the Commander-in-chief to the offensive opinion attributed to him by Arnold. Washington's answer was prompt and explicit. "I cannot," he wrote, "suffer myself to delay a moment in pronouncing, that, if Arnold, by the words, in the letter to his wife, 'I am treated with the greatest politeness by General Washington and the officers of the army, who bitterly execrate Mr. Reed and the Council for their villainous attempt to injure me,' meant to comprehend me in the latter part of the expression, he asserted an ab-

solute falsehood. It was at no time my inclination, much less my intention, to become a party in his cause ; and I certainly could not be so lost to my own character, as to become a partisan at the moment I was called to bring him to trial. I am not less mistaken, if he has not extended the former part of the paragraph a little too far. True it is, he self-invited some civilities I never meant to show him, or any officer in arrest ; and he received rebuke before I could convince him of the impropriety of his entering upon a justification of his conduct in my presence, and for bestowing such illiberal abuse as he seemed disposed to do upon those he denominated his persecutors. Although you have done me the justice to disbelieve Arnold's assertion to his wife, a regard to my own feelings and character claims a declaration of the falsehood of it from, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate, &c."

Satisfied of the truth of the charges on which Arnold was arraigned, and of their ability to sustain them, the President and Council insisted upon their demand for justice, until, after manifold and vexatious delays, Arnold was brought to trial before a court-martial, and, by its judgment, found guilty, and sentenced to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-chief. In his defence, he concentrated all his malignity against the Exec-

utive Council, and especially against President Reed. No terms of recrimination were too violent for his use; and it was on this occasion that the slanderous insinuation had its appropriate origin, that Reed contemplated, at one time, a desertion to the enemy. At the very moment that this was uttered, when Arnold was boasting of his own patriotism and fidelity, and impeaching those of another, he had been, as is now well established, at least eight months in secret correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton, and was maturing the dark scheme of treachery which he soon afterwards attempted to carry into execution. It may be claimed as an honor to the memory of President Reed, that Benedict Arnold was his accuser.

To such legislative and executive interposition as the exigency of the times in Pennsylvania required, President Reed applied himself with characteristic energy. His official and private correspondence attests his untiring exertions under difficulties and embarrassments such as needed a high order of statesmanship to encounter and overcome. At one time, he wrote to General Armstrong that there was not money enough in the treasury to meet a ten pound draft. His energy appears never to have abated; and the result was, that Pennsylvania was foremost among the states in fulfilment of duties to the common

cause; and the ability of his administration was shown in the increased power and available resources of the state, and the efficiency of its military force.

The grievance of an unrelenting party opposition to his administration he appears to have lamented, chiefly as being detrimental to the public welfare. "I should be happy," he said, "if the dissatisfied would defer their resentment, till the removal of the enemy left them no other objects than their own countrymen." The character of his administration was, however, not lowered to any mere temporizing policy of conciliation, but was carried on in the spirit of an intrepid as well as sagacious statesmanship. In a publication made by President Reed towards the close of the first year of his administration, when he had experienced the full force of the opposition, he said, "While there is a British soldier left in arms in these United States, not all the efforts of party, secret or open, poverty or danger, shall induce me to relinquish the station in which public confidence has placed me, and in which I can best oppose the views of the common enemy. When these dangers are passed away, I care not how soon I fall into the rank of a private citizen, a station better suited to my talents and inclination."

Amid the difficulties of his administration

Reed received friendly and earnest encouragement from Washington, who appears to have sympathized, too, with him in his estimate of the opposition which was laboring to embarrass the measures of the state.

"I am aware," wrote Washington to him, in 1780, "of the embarrassments the government labors under from the open opposition of one party, and the underhand intrigues of another. I know that, with the best dispositions to promote the public service, you have been obliged to move with circumspection. But this is a time to hazard, and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity, and give their support. The hopes and fears of the people at large may be acted upon in such a manner, as to make them approve and second your views.

"The matter is reduced to a point. Either Pennsylvania must give us all the aid we ask of her, or we can undertake nothing. We must renounce every idea of a coöperation, and must confess to our allies that we look wholly to them for our safety. This will be a state of humiliation and littleness against which the feelings of every good American ought to revolt; yours, I am convinced, will. Nor have I the least doubt that you will employ all your influence to animate the legislature and the people at large; the

fate of these states hangs upon it. God grant we may be properly impressed with the consequences!

"I wish the legislature could be engaged to vest the executive with plenipotentiary power. I should then expect every thing practicable from your abilities and zeal. This is not a time for formality or ceremony. The crisis is, in every point of view, extraordinary; and extraordinary expedients are necessary. I am decided in this opinion.

"I am happy to hear that you have a prospect of complying with the requisitions of Congress for specific supplies; that the spirit of the city and state seems to revive, and the warmth of party to decline. These are omens of our success. Perhaps this is the proper period to unite.

"I am much obliged to you for the renewal of your assurances of personal regard. My sentiments for you, you are too well acquainted with to make it necessary to tell you, with how much esteem and regard I am, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate humble servant."

The nature of this memoir admits only of a brief reference to but two of the important legislative measures during this administration. The first to be noticed is that, by which remuneration was secured to the soldiers of Pennsylvania, whose services were generously rendered, and whose blood was freely shed, during the war. It

is well known with what difficulty provision, in the shape of a retiring pension, was made to the Continental soldiers, and in spite of what vexatious obstacles Congress at last, in 1778, voted a meagre allowance of half-pay for seven years. In the spring session of 1780, the Pennsylvania Assembly acceded to the recommendation by the executive, and passed a law for the more effectual supply and honorable reward of the Pennsylvania troops in the service of the United States, by which half-pay was secured to every officer and soldier during life. The good effect of this provision was at once manifest. "Pennsylvania," wrote Washington to Congress, "maintains her officers in a decent manner. She has given them half-pay for life. What a wide difference between their situation and that of the officers of every other line of the army, some of whom are actually so destitute of clothing as to be unfit for duty, and are, for that cause only, obliged to confine themselves to quarters!"

The other law alluded to was the act by which slavery was abolished in Pennsylvania. This may be considered as an event of national interest; and the honor of it belongs to President Reed's administration, and peculiarly to the Executive Council, where the measure originated by his influence. It was repeatedly urged upon the legislature, by executive messages and in per-

sonal conferences, until, on the 1st of March, 1780, the law entitled "An Act for the gradual Abolition of Slavery" was enacted, and adorns the statute-book of Pennsylvania, as the first legislative abrogation of involuntary servitude by the independent states of America; the first law enacted, in any part of Christendom, for the abolition of African slavery. A draught of the bill was communicated to the Assembly by the Executive Council, and the following preamble is believed to have been from the pen of President Reed. The fine spirit of a thoughtful and comprehensive humanity, which it breathes, has been the subject of high and deserved praise.

"When we contemplate our abhorrence of that condition to which the arms and tyranny of Great Britain were exerted to reduce us; when we look back upon the variety of dangers to which we have been exposed, and how miraculously our wants, in many instances, have been supplied, and our deliverance wrought; when even hope and human fortitude have become unequal to the conflict; we are unavoidably led to a serious and grateful sense of the manifold blessings, which we have undeservedly received from the hand of that Being, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. Impressed with these ideas, we conceive that it is our duty, and we rejoice that it is in our power, to ex-

tend a portion of that freedom to others, which hath been extended to us, and release them from that state of thralldom to which we ourselves were tyrannically doomed, and from which we have now every prospect of being delivered. It is not for us to inquire why, in the creation of mankind, the inhabitants of the several parts of the earth were distinguished by a difference in feature or complexion. It is sufficient to know, that all are the work of an almighty hand. We find, in the distribution of the human species, that the most fertile as well as the most barren parts of the earth are inhabited by men of complexions different from ours, and from each other; from whence we may reasonably, as well as religiously, infer, that He, who placed them in their various situations, hath extended equally his care and protection to all, and that it becometh not us to counteract his mercies. We esteem it a peculiar blessing granted to us, that we are enabled this day to add one more step to universal civilization, by removing, as much as possible, the sorrows of those who have lived in undeserved bondage, and from which, by the assumed authority of the kings of Great Britain, no effectual legal relief could be obtained. Weaned, by a long course of experience, from those narrow prejudices and partialities we had imbibed, we find our hearts enlarged

with kindness and benevolence towards men of all conditions and nations ; and we conceive ourselves, at this particular period, extraordinarily called upon, by the blessings which we have received, to manifest the sincerity of our profession, and to give a substantial proof of our gratitude.

“ And whereas the condition of those persons, who have heretofore been denominated Negro and Mulatto slaves, has been attended with circumstances, which not only deprive them of the common blessings that they were by nature entitled to, but has cast them into the deepest afflictions, by an unnatural separation and sale of husband and wife from each other, and from their children, an injury, the greatness of which can only be conceived by supposing that we were in the same unhappy case ; in justice, therefore, to persons so unhappily circumstanced, and who, having no prospect before them whereon they may rest their sorrows and their hopes, have no reasonable inducement to render their service to society, which they otherwise might, and also in grateful commemoration of our own happy deliverance from that state of unconditional submission, to which we were doomed by the tyranny of Britain,” &c.

During the years 1779 and 1780, when the military movements of both the American and

British armies were involved in great uncertainty, and when Washington was struggling with the difficulties of deficient supplies and reënforcements, his correspondence with President Reed shows how much he relied upon the sympathy and support of one, who had been his companion in arms during the most gloomy periods of the early campaigns.

"The Council," wrote Reed, in 1779, "are resolved to pursue vigorously your advice, to be prepared for the worst; and should it be necessary to call forth the militia of the state, I shall think it my duty to partake their dangers and fatigues."

"Your intention," was Washington's reply, "of leading your militia, in case they can be brought into the field, is a circumstance honorable to yourself and flattering to me. The example alone would have its weight; but, seconded by your knowledge of discipline, abilities, activity, and bravery, it cannot fail of happy effects. Men are influenced greatly by the conduct of their superiors, and particularly so, when they have their confidence and affection."

In 1780, an extraordinary mark of confidence was shown to the executive of Pennsylvania. In view of the dangers, which were clouding round the American cause, the legislature invested the Council with power to declare martial

law, and to assume dictatorial authority. In the month of August, on the arrival of the French fleet and reënforcements on the coast, President Reed, putting himself at the head of the new levies of militia, marched from Philadelphia, in order to aid in the movement on New York, then contemplated by General Washington. An encampment was formed at Trenton, and the best spirit of subordination and desire for active service were manifested; but Washington found himself obliged, in consequence of difficulties in effecting coöperation with the French troops, to recommend to President Reed to break up his camp, and order the militia to their homes.

Immediately on his return from this short tour of military duty, Reed suffered the most afflicting domestic bereavement that could befall him, the death of a wife, who had so truly shared the adversity of his life. Of ten years of their married life, this firm and gentle-hearted woman had witnessed the early and tranquil part succeeded by the dangers and the miseries of a war, that more than once made her an unprotected fugitive, with her young children, at the approach of the enemy. Trials, such as seldom fall to a woman's lot, were endured with a patient and placid heroism, which never failed to cheer her absent husband in the path of duty; and it was sad that years of such affliction were not crowned

ed with the happiness of beholding the cause, for which they had been encountered, triumphant, and amity restored between her native and adopted countries. These years of anxiety and suffering, though meekly and firmly borne, had been doing their work upon a constitution naturally delicate, and now too much enfeebled for the exertions of a public service which she was unwilling to decline.

The destitute condition of the soldiers in Washington's army had awakened a desire, on the part of the women of Philadelphia, to relieve their wants by a subscription, to be chiefly applied, under the advice of the Commander-in-chief, to the purchase and preparation of clothing. The wife of President Reed was selected as an appropriate person to preside over the efforts that were made, and to conduct the correspondence with Washington. She undertook the duty she was called to, but it was too soon after a recent illness, and she fell a sacrifice to her patriotic exertions. Esther Reed died in September, 1780, at the early age of thirty-four years; and it was with reference to the cause she spent her last strength in, that Washington, writing to Philadelphia not long after her death, spoke of the benevolent office which added lustre to the qualities that adorned her character.

The year 1781, the closing year of Mr. Reed's

administration, continued to be agitated by high party excitement, which was accompanied with a factious malevolence, that some time before had led, in its excess, to a popular disturbance, attended with loss of life. The unanimous resolution of the General Assembly acknowledged the exertions of the President of the state, and gave him the thanks of the House for his spirited and prudent conduct on the occasion, in suppressing the disorder and restoring obedience to the laws.

An event of considerable interest, in connection with Pennsylvania affairs, occurred in the beginning of that year, when, on New Year's night, the whole Pennsylvania line in the Continental army broke into open revolt, and set at defiance all attempts of their officers to reduce the mutiny by force or conciliation. By request of the officers, and under the appointment of the Executive Council, together with authority from Congress, President Reed and General Potter proceeded to the scene of difficulty at Princeton, and succeeded in making a settlement of the mutiny. The causes of the revolt, the circumstances which attended it, and the terms on which the mutineers returned, cannot be dwelt on in a limited memoir like this, which admits only the general statement, that the measures adopted by President Reed and General Potter

were justified and approved by the public authorities, which had committed to them the difficult duty.

Reed, having served in the presidency of the state for the complete term for which he was reëligible, retired from office in October, 1781; his public career, as one of the men of the revolution, closing in the same month in which the war was virtually ended by the surrender of the British army at Yorktown. In the following year, an important professional duty of a public nature was confided to him, when, with James Wilson, Jonathan D. Sergeant, and William Bradford, he was chosen to represent the state of Pennsylvania, as counsel, in conducting the Wyoming controversy with the state of Connecticut. After elaborate arguments before the Court, which was held at Trenton, judgment was given in favor of Pennsylvania.

In the winter of 1784, Reed made a third visit to England, partly on business interrupted by the war, but chiefly for the restoration of health, grievously impaired by the toils, and privations, and solicitudes, to which, with a constitution never robust, he had been exposed, with scarce an intermission, from the beginning of the revolutionary struggle. It was a visit after a lapse of fourteen years, and under circumstances of course greatly changed. After an absence of

about nine months, he returned to America; and, soon afterwards, he received the last of that long list of public honors and trusts, which were conferred upon him. He was elected to Congress by the state of Pennsylvania, at a time, too, when an adverse party controlled the political action of the legislature. The condition of his health, which had not been benefited by his voyage, prevented his taking his seat in Congress. During the winter, the rapid decline of his health confined him to his house, and, on the 5th of March, 1785, he breathed his last, at his residence in Philadelphia. He had not completed his forty-third year; an early and premature death, it might be called, were it not the close of a life so active and eventful.

Among those, who watched by Reed's dying-bed, was his favorite student, James A. Bayard, afterwards a distinguished citizen of a neighboring state. General Reed was buried in the burial ground in Arch Street, belonging to the Presbyterian church, of which he had been a faithful and dutiful member. On his tomb is the following inscription, written by one, who, to just observation of his public career, united an intimacy with the excellence of his character in its private and domestic relations; his valued friend, William Bradford, afterwards Attorney-General of the United States, during the first presidency

This memoir may be appropriately and worthily closed with these words of sepulchral eulogy, from the heart of one of the purest and ablest of those men, who were summoned by Washington to the councils of his administration

“In Memory

Of the virtues, talents, and eminent services, of  
GENERAL JOSEPH REED,

Born in the state of New Jersey, on the 27th of August,  
1741.

He devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge, and early engaged in the study of the law. By his erudition, judgment, and eloquence, he soon rose to the highest eminence at the bar; but at the call of his country, forsaking every private pursuit, he followed her standard into the field of battle, and, by his wisdom in counsel and his conduct in action, essentially promoted the revolution in America.

Distinguished by his many public virtues, he was, on the 1st of December, 1778, unanimously elected President of the state. Amidst the most difficult and trying scenes, his administration exhibited the most disinterested zeal and firmness of decision.

In private life, accomplished in his manners, pure in his morals, fervent and faithful in all his attachments, he was beloved and admired.

On the 5th of March, 1785, too soon for his country and his friends, he closed a life, active, useful, and glorious.”



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